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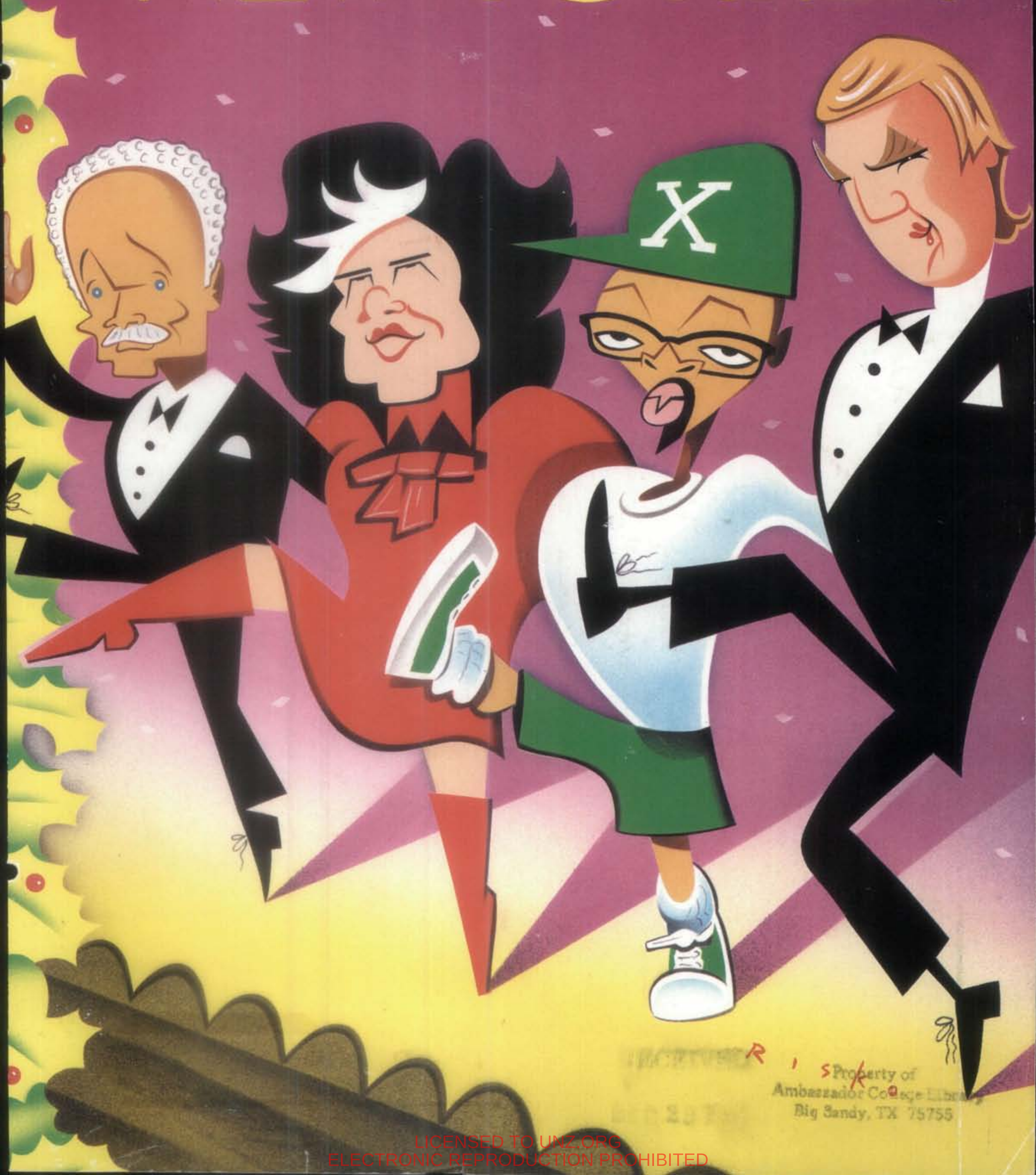

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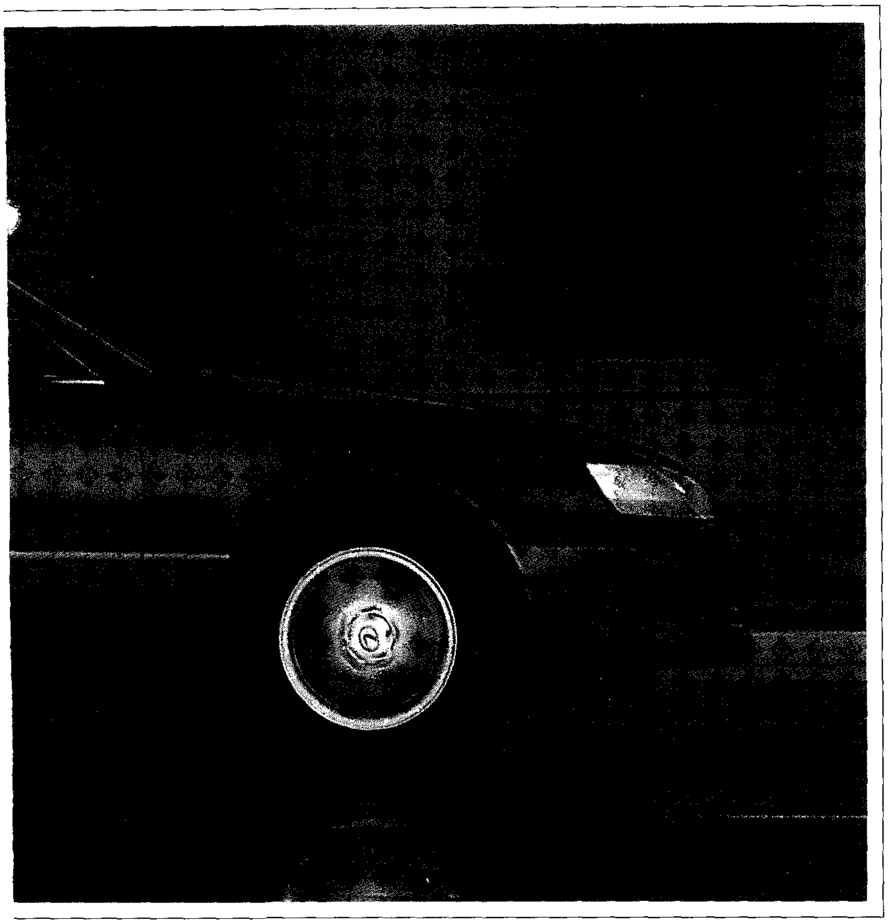

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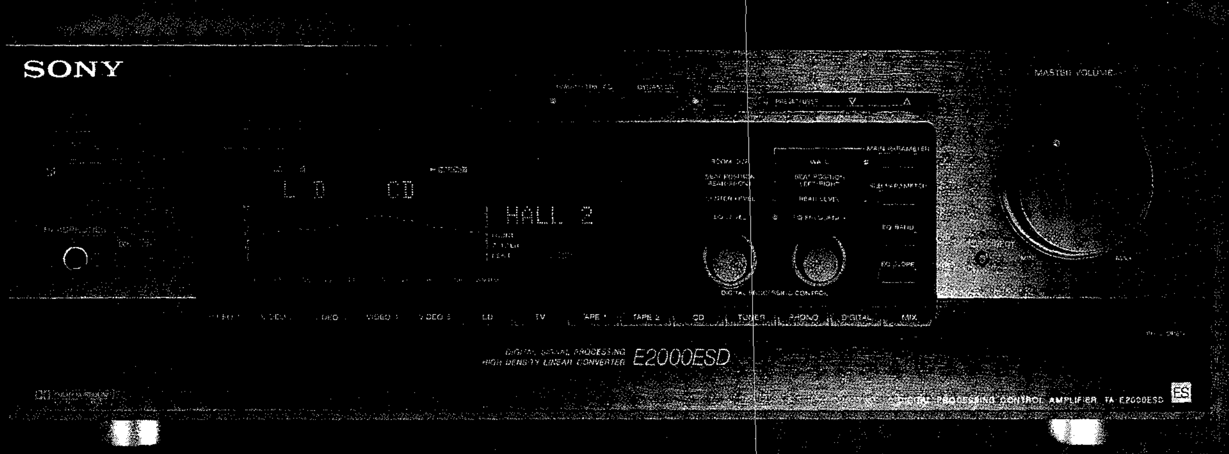
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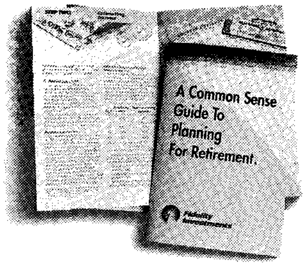

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COMMENT

DECEMBER LIGHT

In the eighteenth century, European naturalists and geographers believed that weather in the New World was given to unusual extremes of hot and cold. This was because of the New World's relatively recent emergence from the sea (so they imagined), together with the geography of its mountains. The mountains in Europe ran across the middle of the continent and separated the balminess of the Mediterranean from the harshness of the north, but mountain ranges in the New World ran north and south, and heat from the tropics and icy air from the Arctic blew about unrestrained. Such was the theory. Nothing about it was true except the directions of the mountain ranges. But, poetically speaking, these eighteenth-century notions do describe the hot-and-cold extravaganzas of a city like New York. For in New York, even when the weather is normal, and scary nor'easters aren't catching us by surprise, equatorial winds do seem to sweep northward and turn the summers into ovens, and Arctic horrors of equal violence sweep southward in the winters, with only the briefest truces in fall and spring.

In New York, the conflict of tropic and Arctic is the story of the streets. The tenement districts and the humbler apartment houses in the older neighborhoods were built with the stone and red bricks that you see in North Sea towns like Amsterdam and in other cities of Northern Europe; they give New York its wintry look. In recent years, ever larger waves of people from the Antilles and other Caribbean zones have moved into these sombre buildings, and the result is that, more than ever, in versions that are half flesh, half architectural, tropical breezes from the south go crashing into frigidities from the north.

In whole neighborhoods of the city, grim old façades stare downward at the sidewalk with Dutch and German sobriety, while, on their brickwork, stone ornaments carved by Italian workmen almost wink at us about Mediterranean alternatives. And below, at street level, yellow signs and purple neon blossom like flowers from the Antilles. The combination is unstable, and in every season

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HONESTY BECOMES NATIONAL POLICY

INNER BEAUTY WINS A CONTEST

THE DOLLAR GETS STRONGER

KNEES GET WEAKER

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

HEADWAY IS MADE

THE HATCHET IS BURIED

PLEASURE OVERTHROWS BUSINESS

WE BECOME COLOR BLIND

THE WINDS ARE GOOD

STOCKS RISE

DEFENSES ARE DROPPED

ROADS ARE REBUILT

WHAT COMES AROUND GOES AROUND

ONE MONTH SUMMER VACATION IS MANDATED

A CURE FOR ALL ILLS IS DISCOVERED

LOSSES ARE RECOVERED

THE MEEK INHERIT THE EARTH

GOOD TRIUMPHS OVER ALL

TO A NEW YEAR

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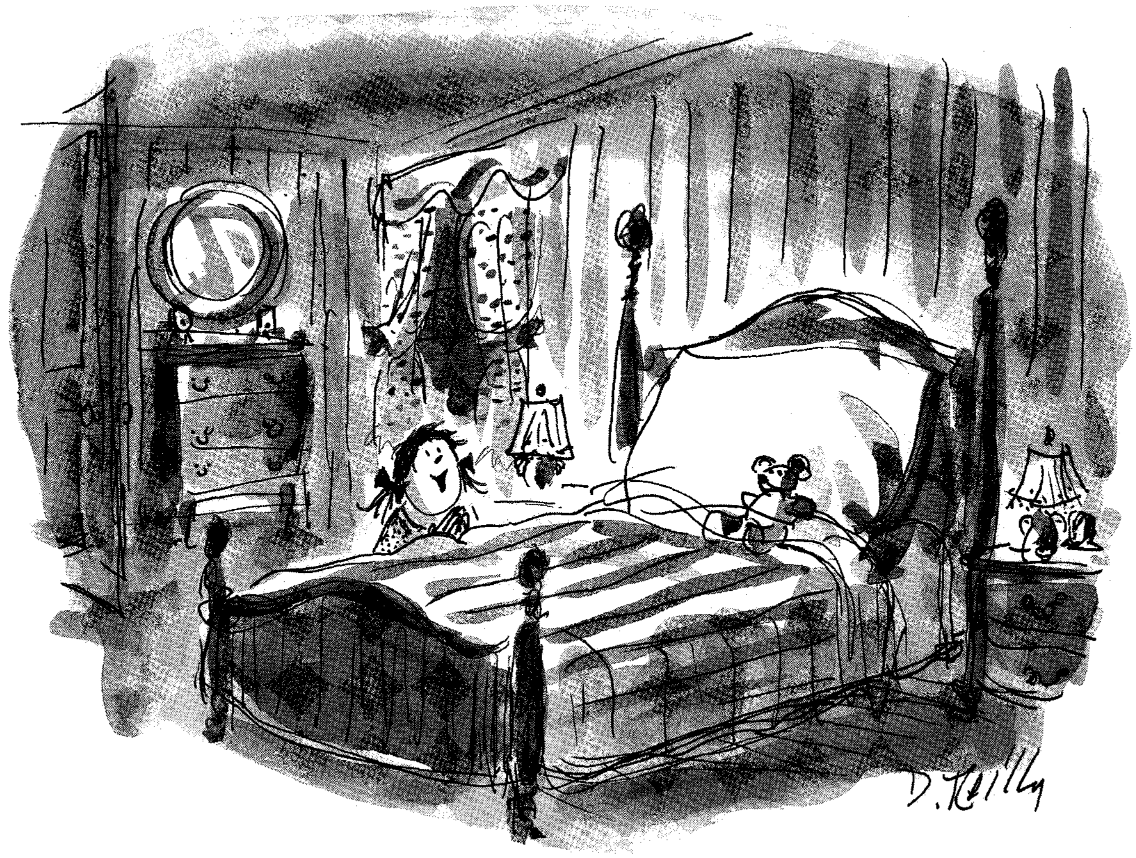

"Plus, I'm a really big fan! Amen."

• •

it manages an almost total rearrangement. In the summertime, when New Yorkers hang out in front of the grocery stores, the Caribbean and Mediterranean seem to rule, and the North Sea retreats to the upper stories. But in the wintertime the North Sea creeps downward from the cornices, the people flee into the stores, and the handful of tropical colors that have somehow survived bob around outside like crates from a shipwreck. Sometimes the extremes of hot and cold confront each other block by block. In the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn, Little Poland looks snug and comfortable on the coldest of winter nights, but on a single street in the heart of Little Poland a few apartment houses constitute what there is of New York's Little Managua, and Nicaraguans hover in the doorways gaping at the spectacle of snow.

About the climatic extremes to which they are exposed, New Yorkers have always wondered: Which season is more beautiful than all the others? It is natural to nominate the spring. For even if springtime in New York follows an unpredictable calendar, and sometimes arrives and departs too quickly to leave an impression, there's always a moment when, because of the sweetness of the air, a sort of veil descends over the brutality of the streets, and New York seems far more agreeable—softer, maybe—than it actually is. It is equally natural to nominate October and early November, when the red and yellow leaves complement the brown and gray of the buildings, and the city looks as colorcoördinated and dapper as a sweater-and-jacket window display in a men's shop.

But this, too, quickly passes. The frantic pace for which the city is famous is meteorologically determined. The dapper autumn colors dissolve into rainy puddles on the ground; the puddles turn to haze, the haze to thunder and violence—this year, anyway. December is the homeliest of times, not the most beautiful. But December has its incongruities. There is a superb clarity to the light, unlike anything in the rest of the year. At certain moments in the weeks before Christmas, the haze disperses and the air turns nearly crystal in the daytime, obsidian at night. The buildings shimmer. Distances seem like nothing. We glance up and down one of the avenues, which, like the Andes and the Rockies, run north and south, and we see for miles. Windows and rooftops in New Jersey show their every detail to someone gazing west from a bench in Central Park. The department stores put up their holiday displays, restaurateurs drape lights from window to tree, silly decorations flash at us from upper floors here and there, and, instead of looking garish or cheap (as they will soon enough, come January), the electric beads sparkle more intensely than seems possible.

The Christmastime hyperclarity in New York makes lines appear sharper than before, buildings seem to cut the air more jaggedly. The color spectrum runs from steely to ochre, but each shade seems to hold itself aloof from all the others. Angles are more angular. The brutality of the New World is greater, not less. And, because the chill in those weeks nips at us, and because only too soon the rain or snow will drive us indoors, none of us, whether northern or southern, have the time or the warmth to stand around dopily contemplating the wonder of it all. We look, blink, and hurry along, faintly aware that beauty, at least in New York, is always a mismatch or a conflict, or even a scientific impossibility—some stray wisp of the Arctic bumping confusedly against poor lost breezes from the tropics, just as the early geographers used to imagine.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This issue is *The New Yorker's* first holiday year-end double issue. Your next copy will arrive the week of January 4th, with a cover date of January 11th. ♦

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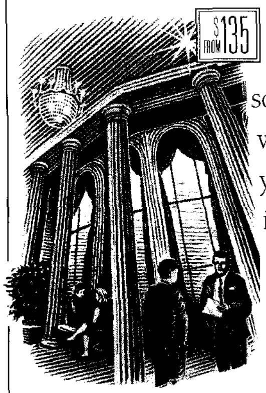

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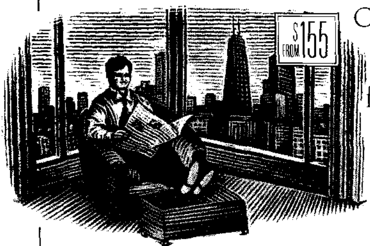

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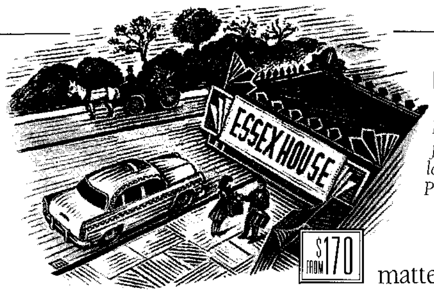

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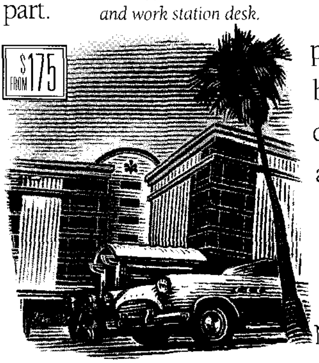

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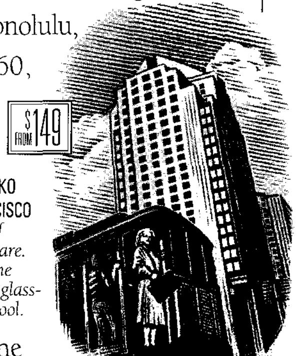

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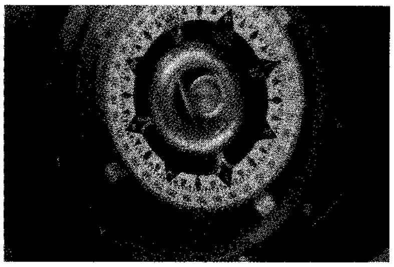

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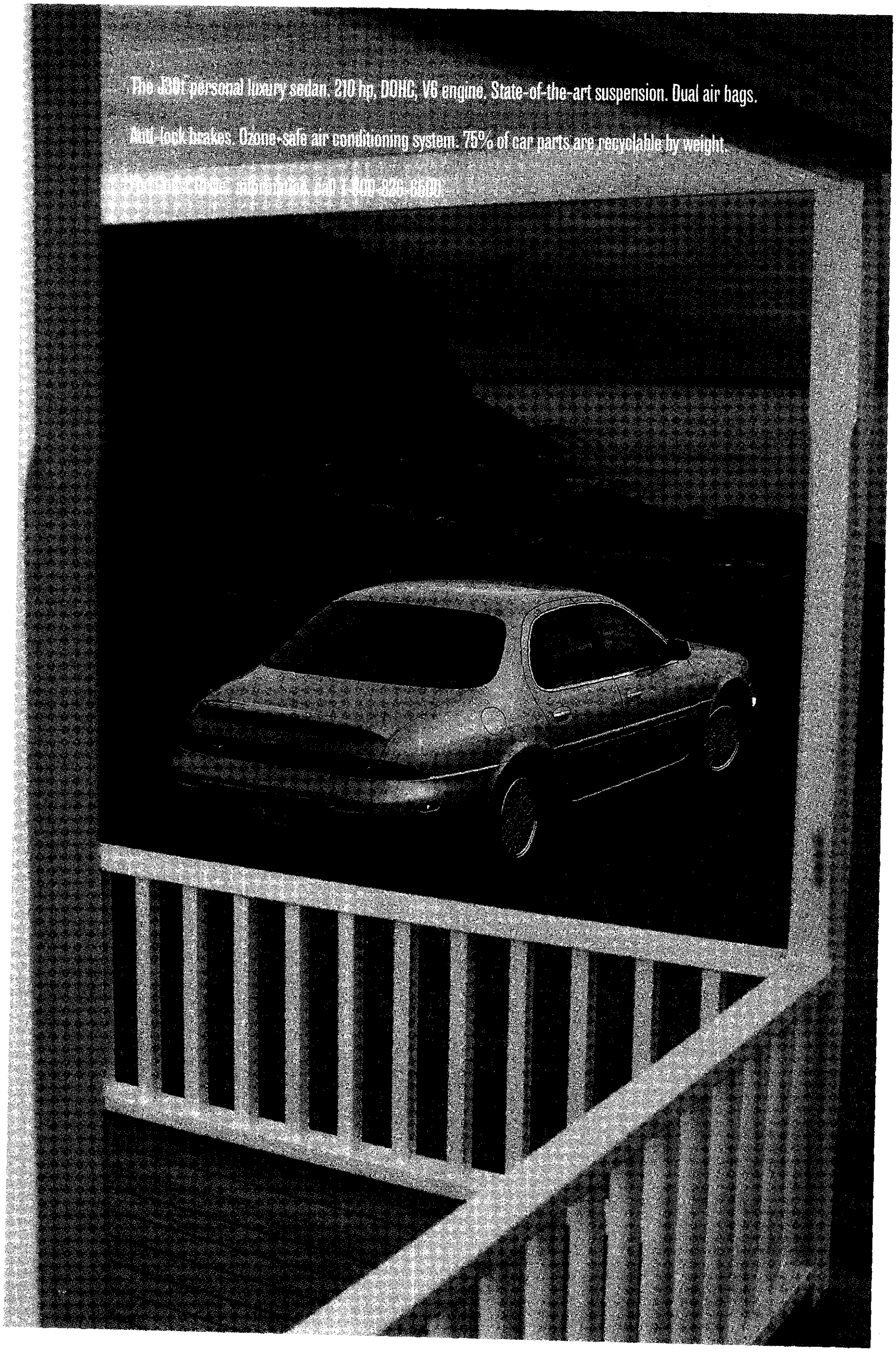
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Footlight Parade

For anyone who ends up returning holiday gifts of clothing, a gentle warning: beware the example of Madeline Kahn. In one of the final scenes of Wendy Wasserstein's current hit play, "The Sisters Rosensweig," Ms. Kahn's character, Gorgeous Teitelbaum, receives an extravagant present: a pink Chanel suit with matching beige shoes. The existence of the outfit has been widely reported, but what no one has seemed to notice is that when the actress decides to take the items back to the store (for reasons it wouldn't be kosher to reveal) she goes about returning them not in their original chic packaging but on her very person. This is puzzling. Like any boutique, Chanel generally requires that returned items be in "salable condition," and it is highly unlikely that the shoes, anyway—scuffed up as they surely would be from the streets of London, where the play is set—would meet that standard.

It is particularly odd that Ms. Wasserstein, of all people, should have overlooked this detail, since she is a well-known footwear enthusiast. Luckily, not only is the lapse easy to correct—just have Gorgeous change shoes before her exit—but it could be done discreetly during the cast's imminent week-long hiatus (beginning January 4). There's always the possibility, of course, that this canny playwright knows about the lapse and has chosen to retain it—proof that she, if not Chanel, loves a shoe in any condition.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Anna Christie—Liam Neeson, Natasha Richardson, Rip Torn, and Anne Meara head the cast of the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of the play by Eugene O'Neill. David Leveaux directed. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Deshima—A new work by Ping Chong. Performances begin Jan. 1 at 7:30, and run through Jan. 17. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

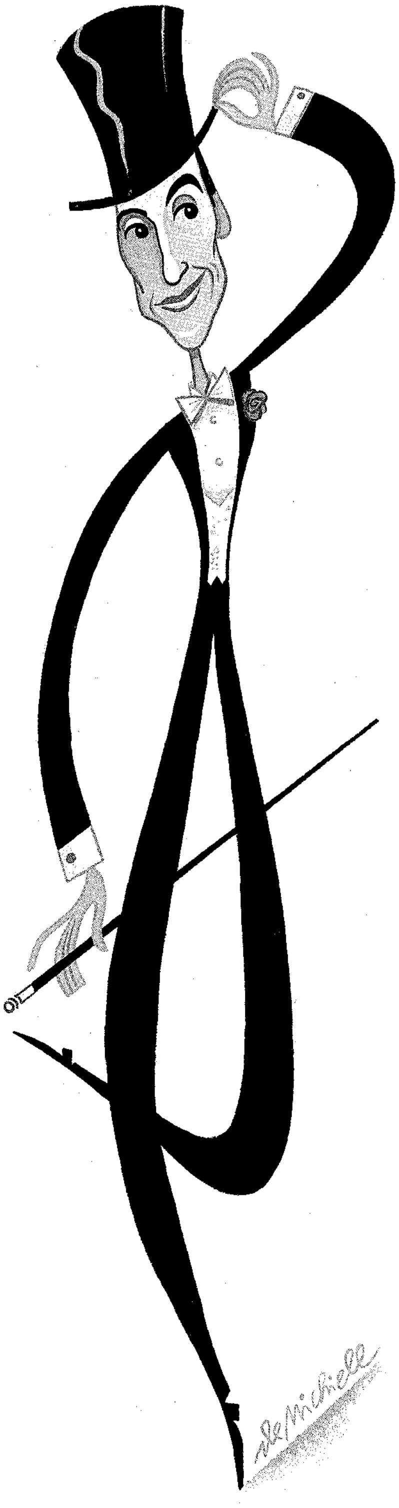
The Good Natur'd Man—A 1768 play by Oliver Goldsmith. Directed by Anthony Cornish. Previews Dec. 26-Jan. 2. Opens Jan. 3 at 8. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

Jeffrey—A comedy by Paul Rudnick. Previews begin Dec. 31. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

New York Gilbert & Sullivan Players—Presenting **IOLANTHE,** Jan. 1-3, and **H.M.S. PINAFORE,** Jan. 7-17. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)

Tommy Tune Tonite!—A song-and-dance show starring the tall Texan. With singer-dancers Robert Fowler and Frantz Hall and a twenty-six-piece orchestra, led by Michael Biagi. Performances begin Dec. 25 at 8, and run through Jan. 3. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

The Years—A new play by Cindy Lou Johnson, with Ashley Crow, Ron Eldard, William Fichtner, Julie Hagerty, Marcia Gay Harden, and Frank Whaley. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)



Tommy Tune at the Gershwin Theatre

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

OPENED RECENTLY

A . . . My Name Is Still Alice—A sequel to the 1984 musical revue "A . . . My Name Is Alice." Conceived and directed by Joan Micklin Silver and Julianne Boyd. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes Jan. 3.)

Brother Truckers—Murder and mayhem from the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, which, at its best (as it is here), gives excess a good name. Everett Quinton, who plays a rich bitch, and Elizabeth Fried, who is Quinton's real-life costumier, are chiefly responsible for the evening's success. The playwright is Georg Osterman. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271. Closes Jan. 3.)

Bubbe Meises, Bubbe Stories—A musical in which a granddaughter recalls her grandmothers and their stories. Written by, and starring, Ellen Gould. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

A Christmas Carol—Patrick Stewart returns to Broadway with his one-man staging of the Dickens classic. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes Jan. 3.)

Conversations with My Father—If you're looking for a totally satisfying theatrical experience, try Herb Gardner's bittersweet memory play about a Lower East Side barkeep, his two sons, and the patrons of his tavern. The cast is led by the wonderful Judd Hirsch; Daniel Sullivan directed. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/13/92.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Destiny of Me—A new play by Larry Kramer. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Falsettos—This back-to-back revival of "March of the Falsettos" and "Falsettoland," two of William Finn's three one-act musicals about a childish, self-absorbed man who leaves his wife and son for his not very nice male lover, is strictly for those who care. (5/11/92) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Five Guys Named Moe—The guys are black dancers and singers of ability and spirit, who perform the songs (either lyrics or music or both) of the late Louis Jordan, among them "Don't Let the Sun Catch You Crying," "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens," and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" This London import makes a merry evening. (4/20/92) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

The Gifts of the Magi—The Lamb's Theatre Company's annual presentation of a musical version of two O. Henry short stories. (130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes Jan. 3.)

Guys and Dolls—A lively production of Frank Loesser's perfect musical, under the direction of Jerry Zaks. Nathan Lane and Faith Prince are the leading guy and doll, and Tony Walton designed the stunning scenery. (4/27/92) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Gypsy Passion—Eighteen Spanish dancers, singers, and musicians in a flamenco revue. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh—A musical based on the song parodies of Allan Sherman. It was conceived and written by Douglas Bernstein and Rob Krausz. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris—A revival of the musical put together from the works of M. Brel by Eric Blau and Mort Shuman. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting **THE IDIOT,** David Fishelson's new adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jelly's Last Jam—The music of Jelly Roll Morton, self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, and, at the same time, an unsparing delineation of Morton himself. The show, an original if there ever was one, was written and directed by George C. Wolfe. In the starring role, Gregory Hines combines his astonishing talents as tap dancer and actor; Savion Glover, who plays the character as a young man, is worthy of him, which is saying a lot. (5/11/92) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

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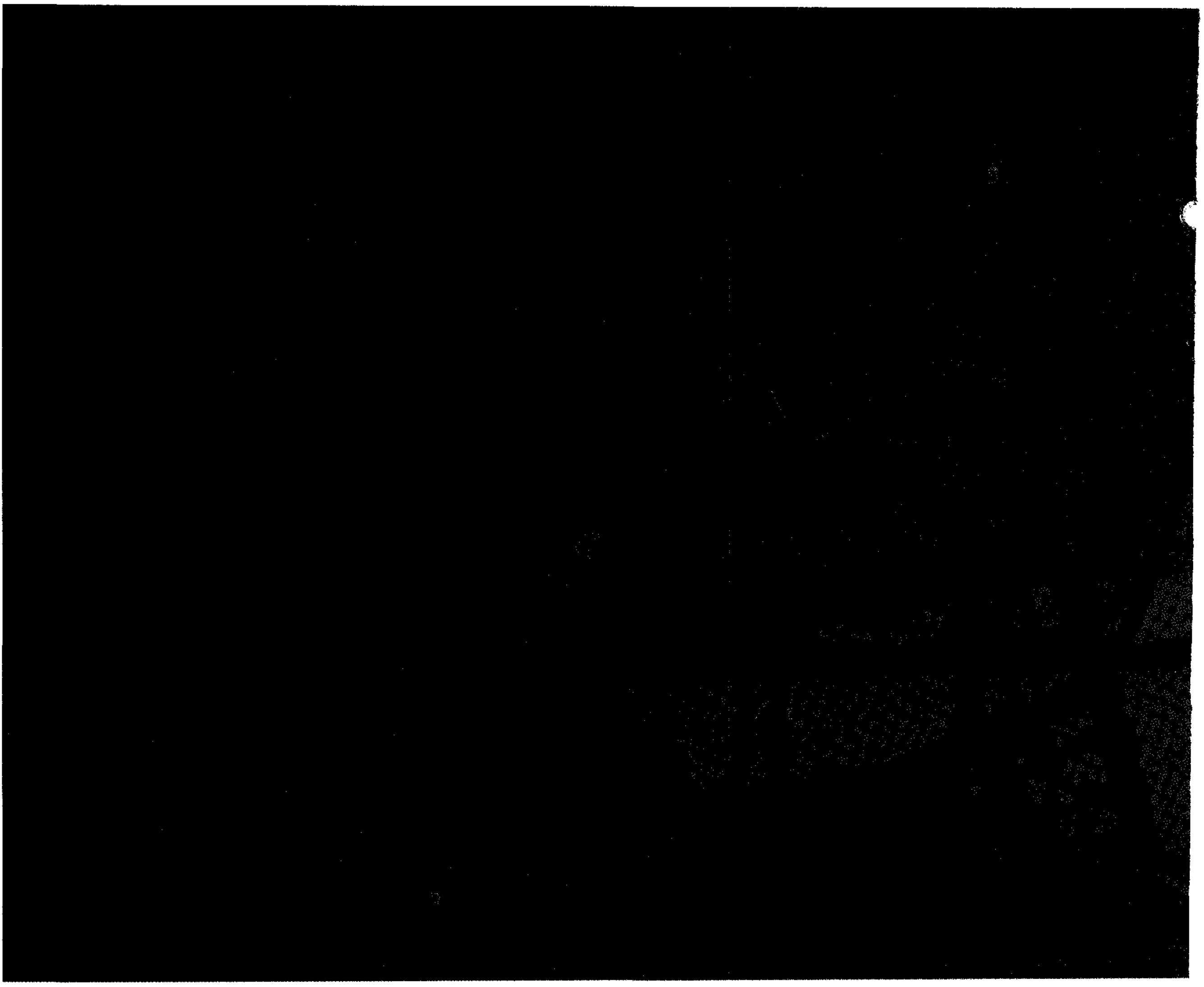

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FINLANDIA
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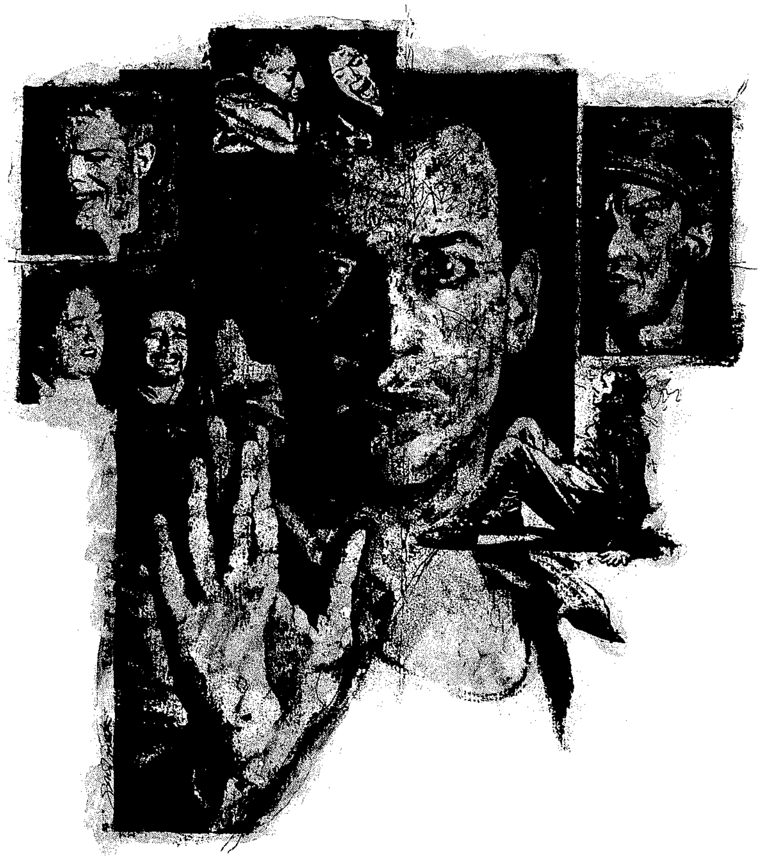
Finlandia. Vodka From The Top Of The World.

As Jarmo Parvi peered out the window on the morning of his 50th birthday, his hopes for an impromptu party began to fade. His wife assured him that not even the sturdiest of friends could be expected to brave two meters of fresh snow. Apparently she underestimated the loyalty of friends, and the drawing power of Jarmo's well-known stockpile of Finlandia.



Jesse Borrego and company in "Woyzeck"

Manhattan Moves—A dance revue about city life, with Melinda Jackson and Michael Kessler. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

My Favorite Year—A new musical, based on the movie of the same name, by Joseph Dougherty, Stephen Flaherty, and Lynn Ahrens. With Evan Pappas and Tim Curry. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Mysteries and What's So Funny?—David Gordon's work about life and art, with music by Philip Glass and sets by Red Grooms. (Joyce, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Closes Jan. 3.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A series of vignettes, by the rising writer/performer David Drake, about gay life in the age of AIDS. Mr. Drake is more gifted as a performer than as a writer, but his show is frequently absorbing—by turns silly and poignant. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

Oleanna—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other isms in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. Rebecca Pidgeon and William H. Macy lend articulate support to a play whose skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. Not to be missed. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

Orpheus in Love—A new comic opera, with words by Craig Lucas and music by Gerald Busby. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes Jan. 3.)

Remembrance—Set in Belfast, Graham Reid's absorbing and often entertaining play stars Milo O'Shea and Frances Sternhagen. (10/12/92) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

Roleplay—A musical by Doug Haverty and Adryan Russ about five women in group therapy. (Village Theatre Company, 133 W. 22nd St. 564-8038. Closes Jan. 3.)

Ruthless!—This camp musical about a monster child star is harmless and amusing enough—assuming you can stomach the little girl. (Players, 115 Macdougal St. 254-5076.)

The Seagull—Chekhov's play launches the second season of the National Actors Theatre. (12/21/92) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes Jan. 10.)

The Sheik of Avenue B—A Jewish ragtime and jazz-era music-and-comedy revue conceived and written by Isaiah Sheffer. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Closes Jan. 3.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Frances McDormand, and Madeline Kahn, each of whom proves worthy (and then some) of her role. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. The show takes a week's hiatus starting Jan. 4; performances resume Jan. 12.)

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me—Alec McCowen (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and James McDaniel (American) give stunning performances as hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Spic-O-Rama—Six well-written characters who have found not only their author but also their performer in John Leguizamo's scintillating and scathing one-man show about Latino life in the Big City. Leguizamo is vivacious, inventive, and very, very funny. The show is original and scenically ingenious. (11/9/92) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

3 from Brooklyn—A comedy-and-music revue. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

Wilder, Wilder, Wilder: Three by Thornton—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company presents Thornton Wilder's "The Long Christmas Dinner," "The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden," and "Pullman Car Hiawatha." (12/21/92) (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. Closes Jan. 3. For reservations, call 886-1889.)

Woyzeck—Jesse Borrego has the title role in a production of Georg Büchner's play, directed by JoAnne Akalaitis. With music by Philip Glass, a translation by Henry J. Schmidt, and sets by Marina Draghici. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Dec. 27.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. (Closes Jan. 3.). . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY:** The show's holiday edition, "Forbidden Christmas," runs through Dec. 27. "Forbidden Broadway 1993" starts Dec. 29. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.). . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211. (Closes Jan. 3.). . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SECRET GARDEN:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200. (Closes Jan. 3.). . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

DANCE

Last-Minute Shopping

Most people who wish to see Balanchine's "Nutcracker," at New York City Ballet, have secured their seats well in advance, but some manage to slip in at the last minute. How do they do it? Here are several ways:

1) At this writing, there are still some tickets left. But even if they're all gone by the time you reach the box office, try again a day or two before the performance you plan to attend. If reserved, unpurchased tickets are not picked up forty-eight hours prior to a performance, the seat locations are made available to the public at that time.

2) Purchase tickets through the New York City Ballet's Challenge Grant Program. The cost is the price of the seat, plus a fifty-dollar donation to the company. (For information, call 870-5662.)

3) Wear comfortable shoes and stand. Tickets for standing room—located in the back of the fourth ring—go on sale at 10 A.M. the day of the performance. If the cast you want to see is a popular one, plan to get in line early. The cost per ticket is ten dollars.

4) Get to the State Theatre a half hour before the performance, park yourself in front of the portico, and say to the crowds flooding toward the doors, "Tickets? Anyone have tickets?" It works.

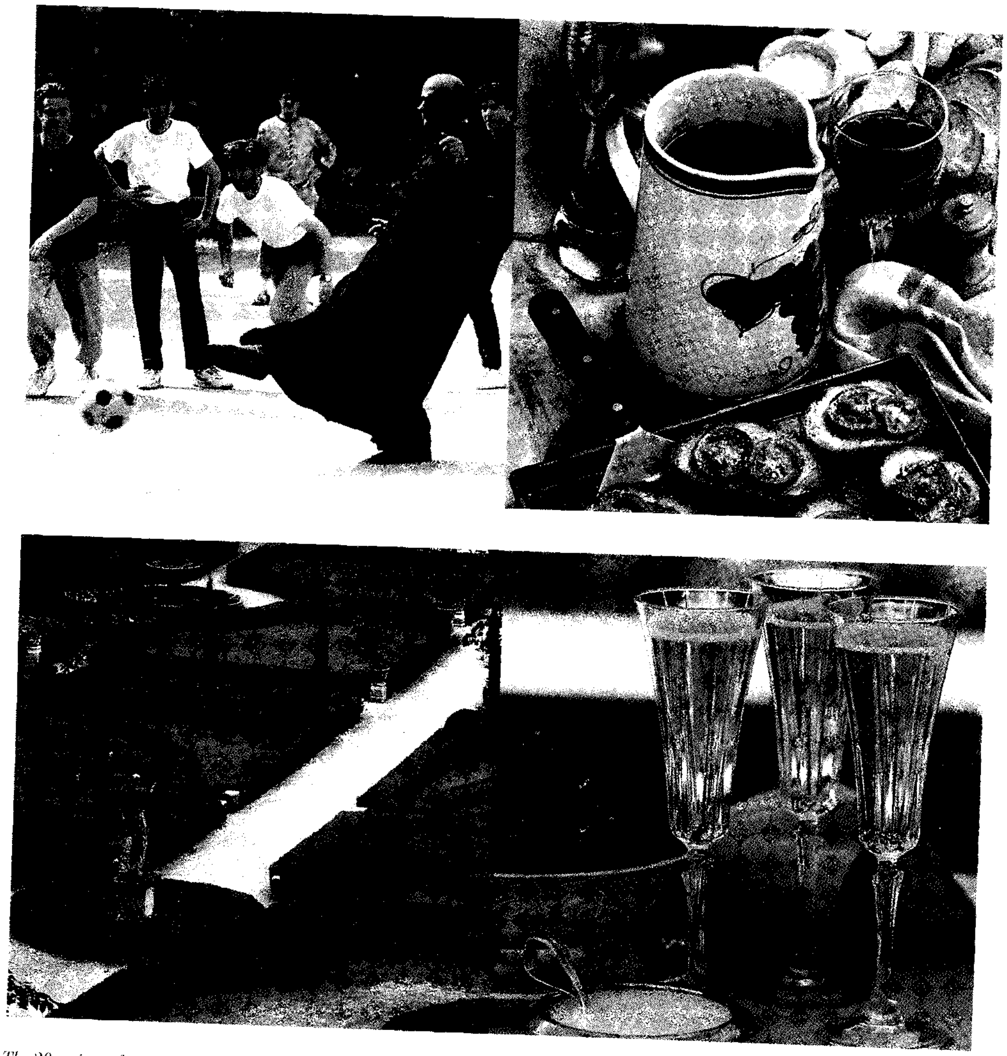
New York City Ballet—Dec. 23 at 2 and 6, Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 at 2 and 8, Dec. 27 and Jan. 3 at 1 and 5, Dec. 28-30 at 6, and Dec. 31 at 7: "The Nutcracker.". . . ¶ Jan. 5 at 8: "Serenade," "I Have My Own Room," and "Symphony in Three Movements." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 21.)

STEVE VIOLA

ITALIAN WINES

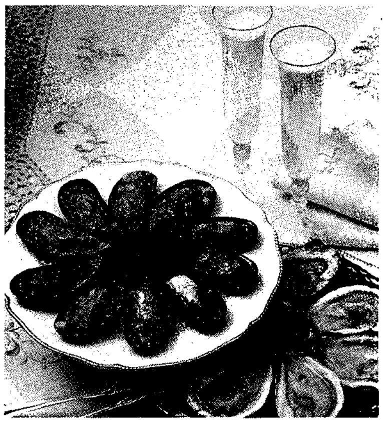
The Quality of Life.

VINO



The 20 regions of Italy produce more varieties of fine wine than any other country. That is why a medium-bodied red wine like Valpolicella from the Veneto and Sangiovese di Romagna from Emilia-Romagna are each appropriate with bruschetta and dessert wines such as Asti Spumante from Piedmont or a sweet Marsala from Sicily are equally right with strawberries and zabaglione.

Italy is a patchwork quilt of twenty regions. Starting with the Italic tribes of 2000 B.C., everyone who was anyone in the Mediterranean or Europe passed through part of the peninsula or its islands, and an everchanging cast of waxing and waning powers left their cultural marks. In the south, Greeks colonized the coast; Etruscans ruled the central boot; Romans were everywhere. In various times and places Phoenicians, Arabs, Longobards, Goths, Byzantines, Normans, Franks, Angevins, Aragons, Austrians, and a large assortment of royals ruled. Art, architecture, and archeological wonders are the result. Geography, history, and dialect kept the regions separate, each with its own unique perspective and distinct customs. Climate and geography may determine growing conditions, but above all, Italy's historical diversity has contributed to a different approach to winemaking and cooking in all twenty regions.



Sparkling whites such as Brut Spumante from Trentino-Alto Adige and Prosecco Brut from the Veneto go well with oysters and mussels.

A seemingly unending list of well-known and lesser-known Italian wines are made from local grape varieties, and in favorite ways, specific to each region. Advanced technology and enological awareness have resulted in a new Italian winemaking Renaissance, producing world-class wines, some from grape varietals known internationally, some from grapes heretofore only known locally. DOC and DOCG laws establish, control (and guarantee with the G) grape variety, territorial zones of production, and yield. These classifications establish parameters for traditional wines. But many individual winemakers, utilizing non-traditional grapes and techniques, produce wines of excellence that fall outside the current DOC laws. A new law, Indicazione Geografica Tipica (or IGT), has been passed that will belatedly regulate these wines, elevating them out of the "Table Wine" category.

Italy's historical diversity has contributed to a different approach to winemaking in all twenty regions.

Prosciutto di Parma, the classic air-cured ham from Italy's Emilia-Romagna region, perfectly complements a variety of Italian wines.

MATCHING WINE AND FOOD

How are regional wines consumed in Italy? — At meals, paired with a wide range of foods. The Italians' informal yet elegant attitude and attire is echoed with an easy-going approach to wine matches. Most diners choose dry sparklers to start a meal; tart white wines in the summer with lighter foods that hot weather demands; reds in the winter with richer and heartier cold weather cucina; and something sweet to drink when indulging in dessert, possibly followed by grappa, distilled from grape pomace.

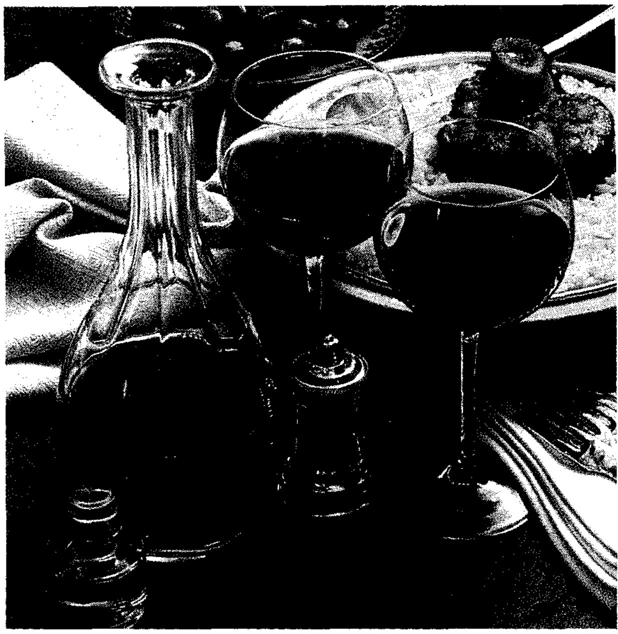
SPARKLING WINES - From classic champenois-technique wines to easy, everyday charmat sparklers, spumante is perfect as an aperitif but can easily accompany a meal. Salted nuts, Prosciutto di Parma wrapped around a breadstick, chunks of Parmigiano-Reggiano, or simple, lightly cooked dishes are suitable for these wines. Recommended DOC wines: Franciacorta Spumante [Lombardia] and Prosecco di Conegliano [Veneto].

FRESH, CRISP, DRY WHITES - Crisp pleasingly acidic whites are well matched with light fish preparations or simple vegetable dishes, pasta with simple vegetables or fish sauces, vegetable soups, or vegetable risotto. Recommended DOC wines: Gavi [Piemonte], Riesling Italico del Trentino and Chardonnay Alto Adige [Trentino-Alto Adige], Soave, Bianco di Custoza [Veneto], Vernaccia di San Gimignano [Toscana], Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi [Marche], Orvieto [Umbria], Fiano di Avellino [Campania].

FRUITY WHITES - Fuller fruity whites with more body are suited to rich pasta, sauced or grilled fish, simply flavored poultry, and Prosciutto di Parma. Recommended DOC wines: Pinot Bianco, Pinot Grigio, Tocai Friuliano del Collio [Friuli-Venezia Giulia], Montecarlo Bianco [Toscana], Breganze [Veneto], Frascati and Marino [Lazio], Greco di Tufo [Campania], Vermentino di Gallura [Sardegna], Cinqueterre [Liguria].

FLORAL WHITES - Floral aromatic whites from the northern regions are matched with spices, herbs, pepper, or rich, reduced fish sauces or soups.

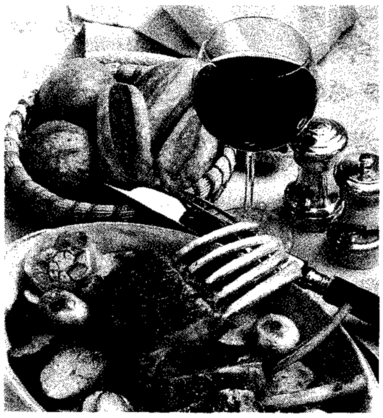
Some recommended DOC wines: Muller Thurgau, Sylvaner, and Gewurztraminer del Alto Adige [Trentino-Alto Adige]. Malvasia Istrina, and Sauvignon dell' Isonzo [Friuli-Venezia Giulia].


Elegant reds such as Montepulciano d'Abruzzo from Abruzzo and Barbera from Piedmont are often paired with osso buco and saffron rice.

Advanced technology and enological awareness have resulted in a new Italian winemaking Renaissance.

FRUITY REDS Fresh fruity reds are paired with meat-sauced pasta, strong-flavored fish dishes, sauced and mixed vegetable preparations, and poultry sausage. Recommended DOC wines: Bardolino, Valpolicella [Veneto], Pinot Nero, Schiava and Lagrein del Alto Adige [Trentino-Alto Adige], Freisa and Grignolino d'Asti [Piemonte], Lambrusco Reggiano [Emilia-Romagna], Cerasuolo di Vittoria [Sicilia].

ELEGANT REDS - Medium-bodied vigorous reds are most often paired with meat, although sauced fowl, rich vegetables dishes, and fresh cheese are also fine accompaniments with these wines. Some recommended DOC wines: Barbera, Nebbiolo, and Dolcetto d'Alba, [Piemonte]. Marzemino and Pinot Nero del Trentino [Trentino-Alto Adige], Rosso di Montalcino and Morellino di Scansano [Toscana]. Torgiano Rosso [Umbria], Rossese di Dolceacqua [Liguria], Cannonau [Sardegna], Cirò [Calabria], Montepulciano d'Abruzzo [Abruzzo], Rosso Conero [Marche], Biferno Rosso [Molise], Schioppettino and Refosco del Colli Orientali del Friuli [Friuli-Venezia Giulia], Taurasi [Campania].


Noble reds such as Carmigiano from Tuscany and Aglianico del Vulture from Basilicata are appropriate with rack of lamb.

NOBLE REDS - Full-bodied reds of Italy, ample aged wines with tamed tannins, demand big flavors, like game braised with wine and spices or aged, dry cheese like Parmigiano-Reggiano. Recommended DOCG wines: Barolo, Barbaresco and Gattinara [Piemonte], Brunello di Montalcino, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, Carmignano, Chianti [Toscana], Torgiano Rosso Riserva [Umbria}. Some recommended DOC wines: Amarone della Valpolicella [Veneto], and Salice Salentino [Apulia].

DESSERT WINES - The dessert wines of Italy range from light sparkling wines scented with flowers to complex molded-by-botrytis or pressed-from-raisin wines. Lighter wines go with lighter desserts; richer, heavier-in-alcohol wines are better suited to more substantial, cream-based confections. Strong-flavored and molded cheese (gorgonzola for example) is well matched with fortified wines. Recommended DOC dessert wines: Moscato d'Asti [Piemonte], Recioto di Soave [Veneto], Verduzzo and Picolit del Colli Orientali del Friuli [Friuli-Venezia Giulia], Greco di Bianco [Calabria], Marsala, Moscato Passito di Pantelleria, Malvasia delle Lipari [Sicilia].

GRAPPA - Grappa, a traditional mood enhancer in Italy's cold, northern, mountainous regions, is distilled from grape pomace, the skins and pits left over after winemaking. Potent, at times aggressive and raw, grappa was customarily tossed down in stemmed shot glasses, liquid warmth for those without central heating. A growing gastronomic awareness and the idea that money could be made from useless skins and pits has inspired winemakers. Centrified grappa is packaged in elegant mouth-blown glass bottles of all sizes and shapes, often distilled from fresh, lightly pressed, single-varietal pomace, using traditional copper or stainless-steel high-tech stills. Modern producers have tamed the rusticity out of the distillate, into a sophisticated conclusion to a meal. Fine grappa is produced throughout Italy, but particularly in the regions of Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and Veneto.

Italian Gardens. The Quality of Life.

From Italy with Elegance.

The sparkling muscat wine with the strawberries and *zabaglione* is an Asti Spumante from Piedmont. We could have chosen a still Vin Santo dessert wine from Tuscany or a sweet Marsala from Sicily. After all, the 20 regions of Italy produce more varieties of fine wine than any other country. And they go with any foods in America.

VINO

Italian Wines. The Quality of Life.

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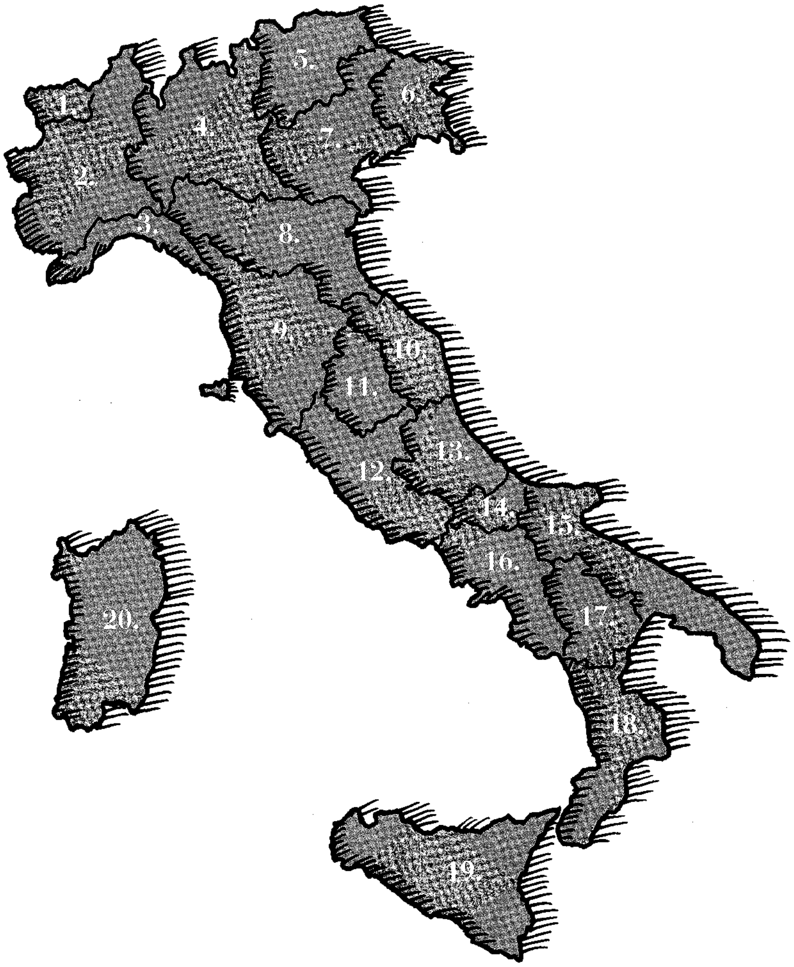
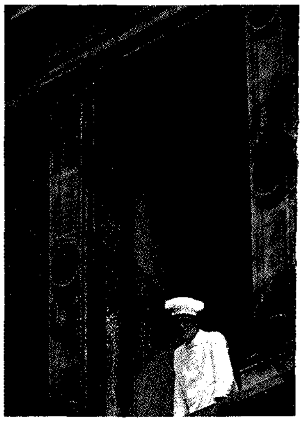


Reading a map of Italy is an adventure in small print, but worth the effort. Understanding the regional sense of identification seems to increase the enjoyment of Italian foods and wines.

1. Valle D'Aosta [Aosta Valley]. Roman ruins, hilltop castles, ski resorts, crafts, rivers charging down the valleys from the Alps, Gran Paradiso National Park. Mountain cheese, polenta, and game are well suited to the hearty reds cultivated on the region's slopes.

2. Piemonte [Piedmont]. Edged with Alps, scattered with medieval towers, churches, and castles. Expensive, highly perfumed white truffles accompany the complex regional cucina, matched with splendid full-flavored red wines. Local marrons-glaces and hazelnut desserts are paired with floral-scented sparkling dessert wines.

3. Liguria. Curving along the crescent of the Gulf of Genoa, Alps blocking the northern chill, Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque architecture, and the jewel of the city of Genoa. The food of the region, fish on the coast, fowl inland, tender vegetables everywhere, is flavored with herbs, dressed with golden extra virgin olive oil; all accompanied by crisp white wines, robust ruby reds, and an occasional, and rare, dessert wine.



Italy's chefs seek perfection in food.

4. Lombardia [Lombardy]. Romanesque, Lombard, and Gothic churches, and the Milan of business, fashion, publishing, power, and wealth. The finest foods and wines travel to Milan to be sold at elegant grocery boutiques or served at home or in fine restaurants. The food is paired with Italy's finest sparkling and white wines and reds ranging from rustic to elegant.

5. Trentino-Alto Adige. Alps, Dolomites, Romanesque and Gothic churches and castles with a northern accent, far from

Mediterranean sunshine and olive oil. In this region smoke-cured pork, mushrooms, alpine cheese, and hearty mountain cooking are matched with first-rate sparklers, fruity whites and reds.

Golden whites such as Roero Arneis from Piedmont and Fiano di Avellino from Campania complement the fettucine con uovo e tartufo.

6. Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Roman ruins, a Longobard village, Romanesque-Gothic churches, paleocristian mosaics. The unique cooking of this region is paired with fruity whites and hearty reds.

7. Veneto. Roman theatres, Byzantine-Lombard and Romanesque-Gothic churches. Venice. Sweet Adriatic seafood, vegetables, and inland game are combined with polenta and rice, served with well-made red, white, and dessert wines.

8. Emilia-Romagna. Byzantine mosaics, Romanesque churches, Gothic palaces, Renaissance art, and sumptuous gastronomic traditions that are among Italy's richest. Hand-rolled pasta, Parmigiano-Reggiano, the world's finest cheese, and Prosciutto di Parma, Italy's favorite ham, are washed down with simple, easy drinking wines.

Opera house in Parma, Italy.

9. Toscana [Tuscany]. Olives, vines, and cypress trees, a backdrop of Renaissance paintings. Etruscan tombs, Roman ruins, Romanesque churches, Renaissance palaces, and an astounding artistic patrimony. Here, in Florence's region, extra virgin olive oil is justly famous, bread is saltless, meat is spit-roasted or grilled, accompanied by traditional whites and robust reds as well as an unique dessert wine, Vin Santo.

10. Marche [Marches]. Gently rolling hills of vines or wheat. Roman ruins, medieval villages, Byzantine-Lombard churches. Coastal seafood and inland lamb, mushrooms and truffles, paired with some of Italy's finest white wines.

11. Umbria. The green (landlocked) heart of Italy, landscaped with olive trees and vineyards. Etruscan tombs, Romanesque and Gothic churches, fortified hill towns. Simple regional dishes are dressed with extra virgin olive oil, well suited to the crisp whites and ruby reds of the area.

12. Lazio [Latium]. The agricultural countryside and sandy coast are overshadowed by the Eternal City, Rome. Monumental ruins, the Vatican, Renaissance and Baroque churches and fountains. Golden white wines accompany a humble but tasty cucina that features lamb, Pecorino Romano sheep's milk cheese, and artichokes.

13&14. Abruzzo and Molise. Roman temples, Longobard cathedrals, and mountains. Tart whites and rugged ruby reds are well suited to elemental cooking of seafood on the coast and lamb and pork, spiced with hot diavolino chili pepper, in the interior.

15. Puglia [Apulia]. Prehistoric monuments, Romanesque cathedrals, Gothic castles, Baroque palaces. Plains of wheat are turned into first-rate pasta or bread, vegetables play an important role in the region's cooking, and foods are paired with crisp whites and reds of character.

16. Campania. First-rate classical monuments, breathtaking coastal scenery, and Neapolitan architecture. Regional cooking is basic, mozzarella is king, and local citrus, hazelnut, and almond perfumes are reflected in regional white wines.

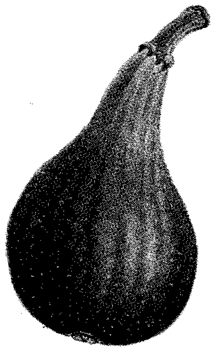
17&18. Basilicata and Calabria. Archeological digs in progress, Roman theatres, bridges, Romanesque churches, and a hint of Baroque. The rustic cooking flavored with mountain herbs is well suited to local red wines.

19. Sicilia [Sicily]. Greek temples, Norman castles, Roman villas, Byzantine mosaics, crumbling Baroque palaces. Tomatoes, eggplant, citrus fruit, and almonds are world-class. The cooking shows signs of cultural diversity, and is well accompanied by easy, everyday whites, lively reds, and intense amber dessert wines with territorial perfumes.

The spirit of Italy is evident in its people.

20. Sardegna [Sardinia]. Prehistoric monuments, seaside resorts, archeological sites, and sheep. Suckling pig, sheep's milk Pecorino cheese, and flatbreads baked in a wood-burning oven are paired with vigorous golden whites, or preceded by a Sherry-like aperitif wine of unusual elegance.

Faith Heller Willinger, free-lance food and wine writer, author of *Eating in Italy* (Hearst), has lived in Italy for twenty years, and writes in her Tuscan kitchen.



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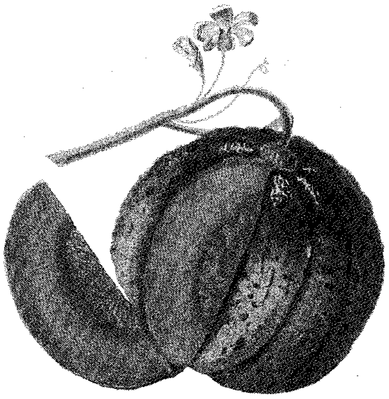

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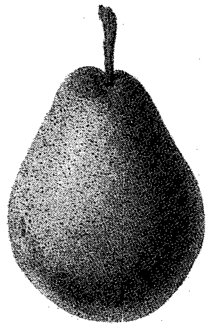

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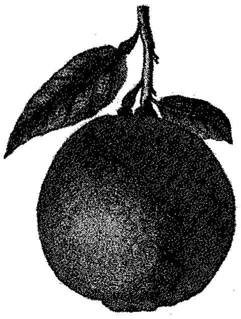

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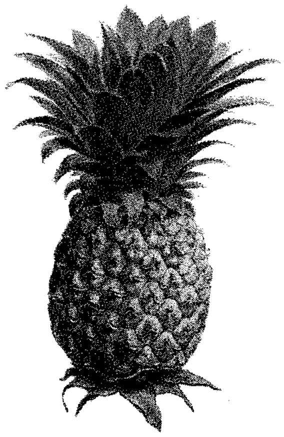

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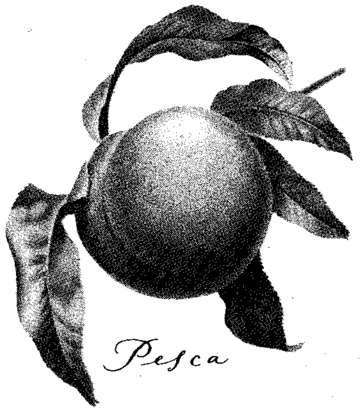

Pesca

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DANCE—Cont'd

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre—Final performances of the engagement. Dec. 23 at 8: "The River," "Forgotten Time," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 25 at 8: "Fontessa and Friends," "A Folk Dance," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 26 at 2: "Escargot," "Pas de Duke," "Frames," and "Memoria."... ¶ Dec. 26 at 8: "Blues Suite," "Cry," "Forgotten Time," and "The River."... ¶ Dec. 27 at 3: "Fontessa and Friends," "North Star," "Treading," and "The Stack-Up."... ¶ Dec. 27 at 7:30: "Hidden Rites," "Masekela Langage," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 29 at 8: "Dance at the Gym," "Shelter," and "Revelations."... ¶ Dec. 30 at 8: "Streams," "Cry," "Frames," and "District Storyville."... ¶ Dec. 31 at 8: "Memoria," "Night Creature," "The Lark Ascending," "Opus McShann," "For 'Bird'—with Love," "A Song for You," "Blues Suite," "Cry," and "Revelations."... ¶ Jan. 1 at 8: "Fontessa and Friends," "The Winter in Lisbon," and "Revelations."... ¶ Jan. 2 at 2: "Memoria," "Shelter," and "The Winter in Lisbon."... ¶ Jan. 2 at 8: "Escargot," "Cry," "North Star," and "District Storyville."... ¶ Jan. 3 at 3: "Fontessa and Friends," "A Folk Dance," and "The Winter in Lisbon."... ¶ Jan. 3 at 7:30: "The River," "Shelter," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Margie Gillis—Opening performance of a solo engagement that includes five premières: "Variations," "Desert," "Landscape," "A Gathering," and "Margret of Roseland." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Jan. 5 at 8. Through Jan. 10.)

NIGHT LIFE

Not in Kansas Anymore

Who is Freedy Johnston and what is his name doing on so many of this year's best-of lists? The answer to the first question is that he's a thirty-one-year-old singer-guitarist-songwriter who was raised in Kansas and migrated to New York in the mid-eighties. The answer to the second: his second album, "Can You Fly," is a real sleeper. Johnston (who will be at Maxwell's on January 2) is a welcome addition to the swelling ranks of non-aligned songwriters—artists who borrow from many genres in pursuit of an idiosyncratic vision. In Johnston's case, the genres include folk, country, rockabilly, and rock, and the vision is like a fevered dream.

What's remarkable about "Can You Fly" is how well the music and the lyrics complement each other: there's no weak link. Johnston and his cohorts, who include Syd Straw, Chris Stamey, and Marshall Crenshaw, are consistently sharp, and the production is crisp. Johnston's voice is high, reedy, and poignant; like Bob Dylan's or Neil Young's, it's the kind of voice whose imperfections are its strengths. Johnston's themes include longing, rootlessness, and the tug of memory. Recalling a youthful love, in "The Mortician's Daughter," he sings, "We drew our hearts on the dusty coffin lids." And, having grown up in a small town, Johnston naturally has a few things to say about getting out. As he sings in "Wheels," there "really is a town called Hopeless."

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Call the phone number listed for performance schedules and, since musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change, to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**Andrea Marcovicci's** cabaret juggernaut rumbles into its third month in the old-timey environs of the Oak Room. The singer is currently offering "Home for the Holidays." On Jan. 5, she turns her attention to a program called "Double Torch." The late show on Fridays and Saturdays is "Just Kern." Dining. No show Christmas.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. The **Freddie Bryant** quartet turns up on Dec. 30; **Dakota Staton** performs with a trio on Dec. 31; and the **Hilton Ruiz** quintet comes in Jan. 1-2. Dining. Closed Dec. 24-25.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. **Monty Alexander's** Nat King Cole tribute, with Clark Terry and Grady Tate, closes shop on Dec. 27, and **Toshiko Kankawa** performs on Dec. 28. **Chick Corea** and his "Akoustic Band" will be on the premises Dec. 29-Jan. 3; **Kenwood Dennard** appears on Jan. 4; and **Koko Taylor** plays a week's worth of dates beginning on Jan. 5. She'll join Chick Corea and Hilton Ruiz on New Year's Eve, too.

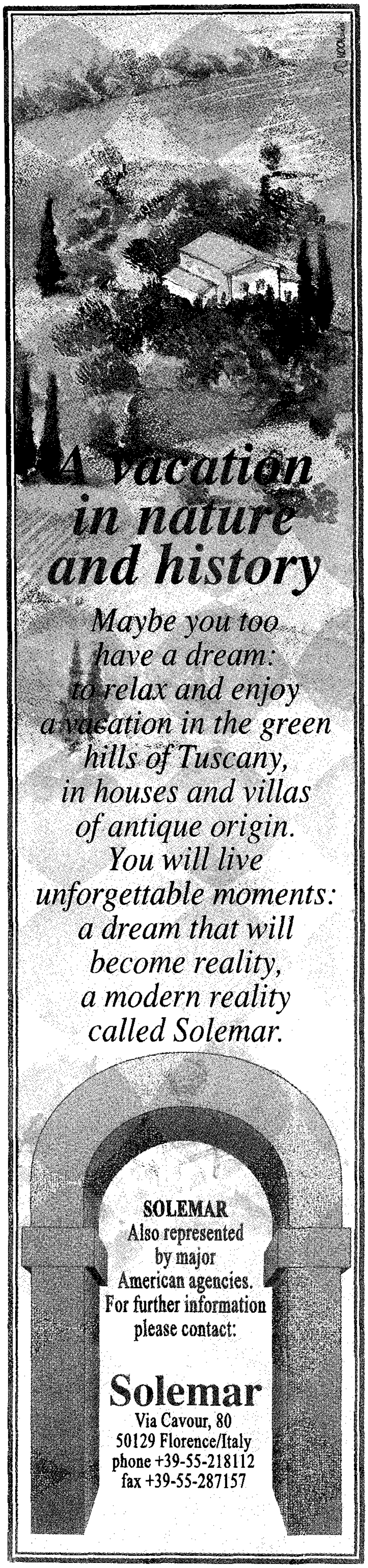
Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Folk and fries. The **Turtles**, who can always be counted on to make an appearance here at this time of year, formed in 1963. They spent the mid-sixties turning out hits—"Happy Together" was a smash in '67—and postponing an inevitable breakup. Well, all good bands have their day, then quietly fade away, and then return to milk the public a little longer. The Turtles have had a pretty free-flowing membership over the years, but rest assured that founding members Flo and Eddie are on board for these shows, Dec. 30-Jan. 2.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. The **Robin Eubanks** quartet is here on Dec. 27, and pianist **John Hicks** leads a trio Dec. 28-Jan. 2. Dining.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian little Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage and no music schedule. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have turned up and tuned up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. Closed Christmas.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **Bobby Short**, who once had this to say about New Year's Eve: "There's not much to do when you're grown up. You have dinner with friends. You have a kiss and a toast, and you toddle out into the night." Short goes on sabbatical after Jan. 2, and the **Modern Jazz Quartet** begins a three-week engagement on Jan. 5. The quartet has been doing its fastidious swinging for more than thirty years and has more than four hundred pieces in its repertoire. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Barbara Carroll** presides at the piano. There will be no live music on Christmas and New Year's Day.

Continental Club, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St.—This two-floor establishment has been all



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things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off-Off Broadway theatre. Physically, the place is sagging a bit, but it has an odd, dingy charm. The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night. The dancers span all ages and shoe sizes, but all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. The Clark Eno orchestra will be in on Dec. 27. On Jan. 3, the stage belongs to the Roy Gerson orchestra. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the Society, call 696-9737.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. KIM & MARION appear through Dec. 27, and the FOUR FRESHMEN are here Dec. 29-Jan. 3. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor LES PAUL, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly. KEN PEPLOWSKI is here on Dec. 24 and Jan. 1, with Frank Vignola on guitar, Tom Melito on drums, and Murray Wall on bass. The JUDY BARNETT sextet will welcome in the New Year on Dec. 31. On Jan. 4 RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT holds forth. Dining. Closed Christmas.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld cartoons. Up front, at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. Herman Foster and Jon Burr are here through Dec. 26. From Dec. 30 to Jan 2, JUDY CARMICHAEL and MIKE HASHIM are in residence.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A frat house for the avant-garde. This month's bookings are typically diverse and include SUN RA AND HIS ARKESTRA (through Dec. 26), a Kwanzaa celebration (Dec. 29), JOHN ZORN and Peter Missing (Dec. 30), and JAMES BLOOD ULMER (Dec. 31-Jan. 2). Jan. 5 belongs, in part, to BRENDA KAHN, *who is not like other people.* Kahn's latest record is an endearing batch of off-kilter folk called "Epiphany in Brooklyn." It's a blissfully low-budget affair, laced with ragged acoustic guitars and out-there vignettes about living and loving in the neurosis capital of the world. Kahn draws on a variety of influences. She can rant like a punker; she can warble like a New Waver; and she can also sing. There's always a surprise around the next corner: "She's in Love," for instance, sounds like Dylan via Springsteen.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—This blues bar stands apart from the Upper East Side's usual array of singles bars, and has become a big draw for the neighborhood's army of post-collegiates. The neon beer signs, Manny's caps, and funky drinks lend the place a campus aura, but don't let that put you off: this long, dark, brick-walled room is a good spot to catch blues artists both major and minor. On Dec. 24, MARK THE HARPER comes in for a night. BO DIDDLEY, JR., and the Black Widow Band are here on Dec. 26. The Holmes Brothers will take the stage on Dec. 30. LITTLE MIKE AND THE TORNADOES will play Dec. 31-Jan. 2.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. The MEKONS, who'll be in on Dec. 31, are longtime critical and cult favorites who've never managed to reach a mass audience. This Leeds band presents itself as a cross between a revolutionary commune and a seminar on itself, which would be pretty awful if these survivors from the days of punk didn't play such marvellous, haunting music. FREEDY JOHNSTON, JEFF BUCKLEY, and BIANCA MILLER take part in a benefit on Jan. 2.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The Jelly Roll Morton tribute that's been in session since October is enjoying an open-ended run. VERNEL BAGNERIS portrays the self-proclaimed inventor of jazz with elegance, verve, and compassion, providing an intimate counterbalance to the psychologically tortured depiction currently being purveyed on Broadway. Bagneris bases his script on interviews that Jelly Roll taped in the thirties, and intersperses virtuosic renditions of sixteen numbers—all packed into little more than an hour. Pianist Morten Gunnar Larsen complements him capably at the keyboard. Closed Christmas.

NEW MUSIC CAFÉ, 285 West Broadway. (941-0900)—Located at the crossroads of New Jersey, Brooklyn, and SoHo—an excellent place to get hit by a truck—this restaurant-bar is likely to contain visitors from all three. It's a big, high-ceilinged, broad-windowed place, where conversations tend to be boisterous and the bands even more so.

RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A cabaret in the clouds, where a Jule Styne revue is playing through Jan. 2. The show, the fifth in this cabaret's well-received series of composer tributes, features ANN HAMPTON CALLAWAY, GREGG EDELMAN, DAVID GARRISON, JAY LEONHART, and KAY MC CLELLAND, among others. Styne, who turns eighty-seven on New Year's Eve, has an imposing list of stage and screen successes, including "Gypsy," "Funny Girl," "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," and on and on. He's still at it, too: besides having a new musical in the works, he served as creative consultant for this event. MARY CLEERE HARAN comes in on Jan. 5 for a three-week run. Dining.

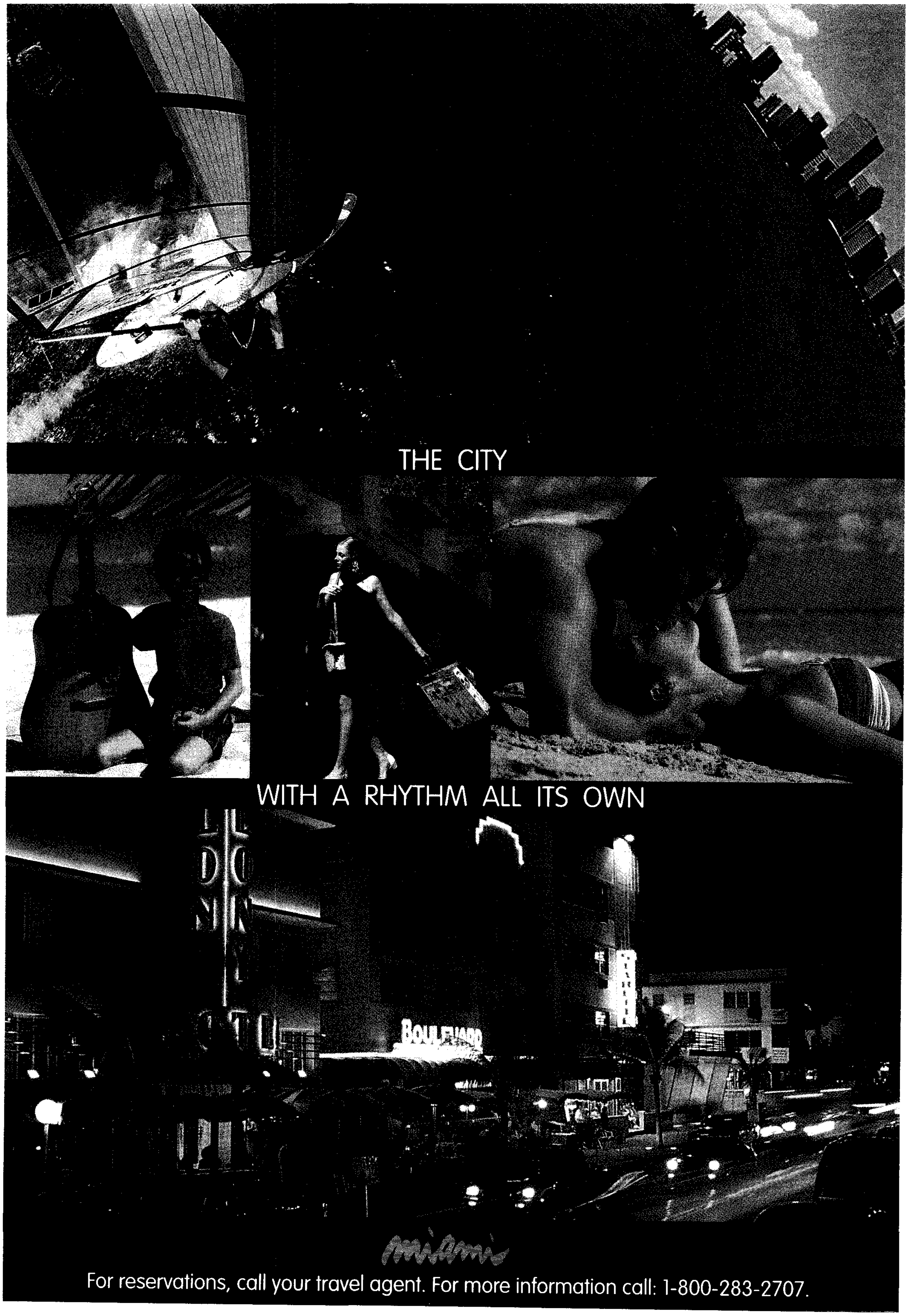
RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Jazz Society, Tuesdays and Fridays to VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS, Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers, who will also play on New Year's Eve. On Dec. 25, Sam Ulano and his Dixie Swingers will be here. Jack Twomey and his big band will share a bill with Rick Hardeman and his Basin Street Six on Dec. 30.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—*AMANDA MC BROOM has done some stage and* television work, but her *Who's Who* entry would have to revolve around the fact that she wrote Bette Midler's No. 1 heartstring hit, "The Rose." McBroom, who has made a handful of albums and even started a record label, will be here on Dec. 31. Dining.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. On Dec. 30, there's a Kwanzaa festival that includes performances by Kimati Dinizulu and Women of the Calabash. On Dec. 31, S.O.B.'s is the site of a Latin-music bash featuring the fifteen-piece LA TROPICA ORCHESTRA, which will be fronted by conga kingfish RAY BARRETTO and singer TITO NIEVES. Dining. Closed Sundays and Christmas Eve.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine where you have to pass within inches of the stage to reach the rest rooms. This is significant because, if you head to the bathroom during a set, the crowd is likely to think you're a guest soloist. Until Dec. 27, the room is home to "A Modern Portrait of Louis Armstrong," which includes performances by Doc Cheatham, Don Byron, and the Allen Lowe Orchestra. The NAT ADDERLEY quintet is here Dec. 29-Jan. 3, and MC COY TYNER'S trio holds forth for two weeks beginning on Jan. 5. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter MILES EVANS is in action on Mondays. Dining.

TOMPKINS PARK RESTAURANT, 141 Ave. A, at 9th St. (260-4798)—A homey night spot from which you can watch East Village funkazoids walk by in their platform shoes and their Cat-in-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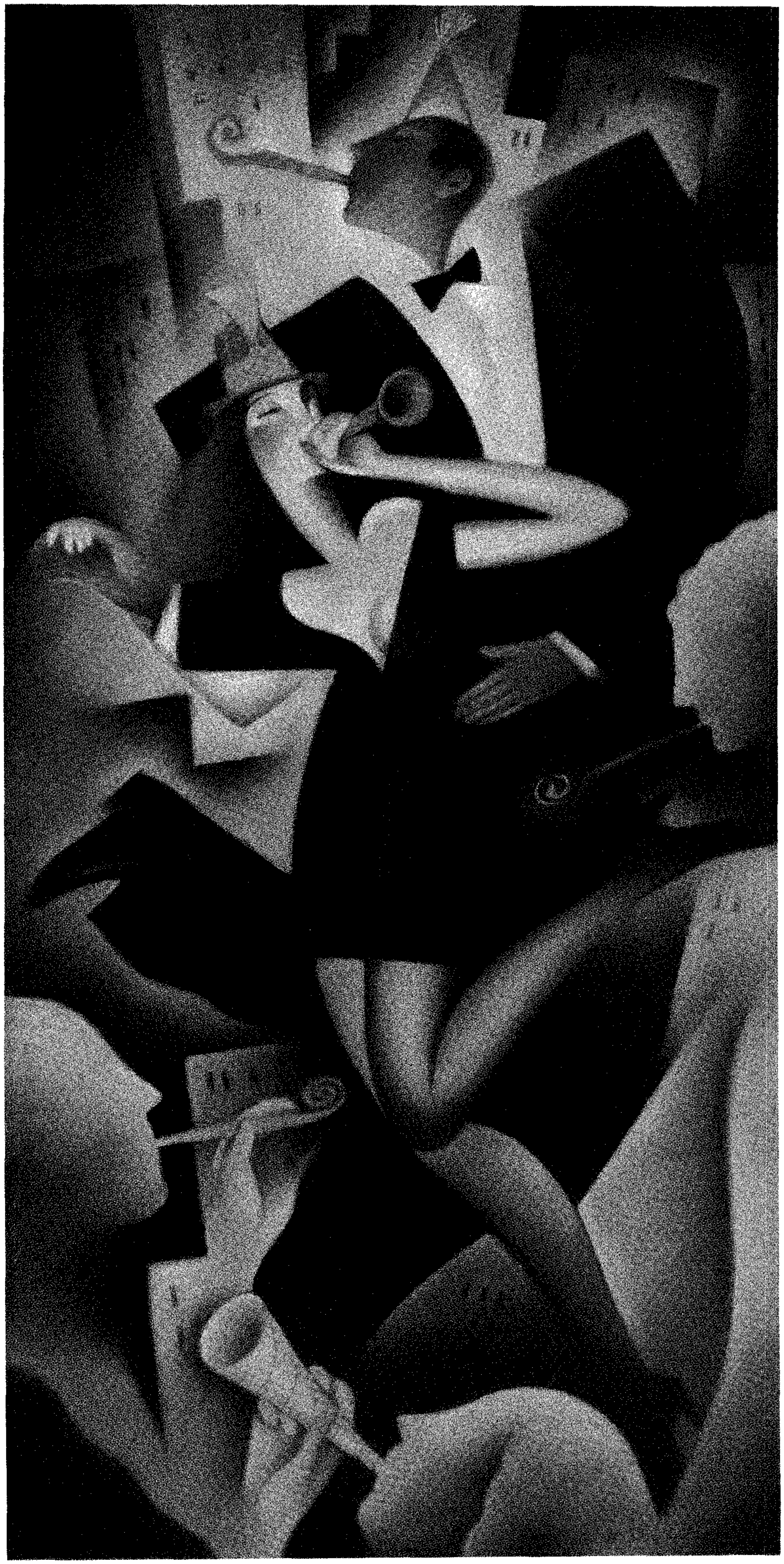

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

GARY KELLEY

NIGHT LIFE-Cont'd

the-Hat headgear. The restaurant is directly across from Tompkins Square Park, and it's split down the middle to separate those who drink from those who eat *and* drink. The menu is vegetarian-friendly. The atmosphere is a bit old-fashioned. Just now, there are some white Christmas lights strung up over the bar; there's an informal art show on the walls; and jazz outfits are on the stage Thursdays through Saturdays. Closed Dec. 24-25.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Thanks to low lighting, muralled pillars, ironwork, and a beautifully restored old tin ceiling, this loft space manages to feel homey. The sound system can be overwelming, but the place is big enough to accommodate both those who want to lose their hearing and those who don't. Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. Dr. John and Rockin' Dopsie will be in on New Year's Eve. Jan. 1 belongs to the **MEKONS** (see Maxwell's). Dining. Closed Christmas.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—An underground jazz club. The Vanguard feels a little like a bomb shelter, but jazz fans couldn't ask for a better place to sit out the Apocalypse. **EASTERN REBELLION,** which consists of Ralph Moore, Cedar Walton, David Williams, and Billy Higgins, is on the premises through Dec. 27. **MICHAEL WHITE'S** Original Liberty Jazz Band of New Orleans appears Dec. 29-Jan. 3. White's clarinetistry and improvisational style hark back to Johnny Dodds and, by extension, to the golden age of Kid Ory, King Oliver, and the Jelly Roll. Despite their relative youth, the group's members ooze authenticity while letting their own personalities shine through; they do their Crescent City heritage proud. Doubters (or the merely curious) can consult the Antilles recording of the band's Vanguard gig from a year ago, which includes a guest drop-in by Wynton Marsalis and an obscure blues number by the late trumpeter Cladys (Jabbo) Smith (a favorite of the club's redoubtable proprietress). Classic jazz is rare at this club, but New Year's with White at the Vanguard looks like an annual tradition in the making. Then it's back to more up-to-date fare, with **MICHEL PETRUCCIANI'S** quartet starting up on Jan. 5. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Usually thought of as a Deadhead hangout, the club has also been the launching pad for a generation of young New York bands like Blues Traveler and the Spin Doctors. Shows here can be absurdly tight, making it hard to see the stage. Still, there's always a mellow corner to retire to. Closed Christmas Eve.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Soft lights, Italian cuisine, and—off in the distance—a thing called jazz. The **LENORA HELM** duo is here on Dec. 27, and pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** performs with bassist **CECIL MC BEE** and trumpeter **MARCUS BELGRAVE** Dec. 28-Jan. 2. Closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Next Wave Festival—The annual fiesta comes to a close with performances of "The Hard Nut," Mark Morris's adaptation of "The Nutcracker." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Dec. 23 and Dec. 26 at 1 and 7, and Dec. 27 at 1.)

Radio City Christmas Spectacular—The sixtieth-anniversary edition of the show. The Rockettes will be kicking away and, in one number, playing glockenspiels. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Through Jan. 6. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

Big Apple Circus—In its annual holiday engagement. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. Through Jan. 10. For information about show times and tickets, call 268-0055.)

Bread and Puppet Theatre—Presenting "Nativity 1992." (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Dec. 30-Jan. 3 at 7:30 and 9:30. Through Jan. 10.)

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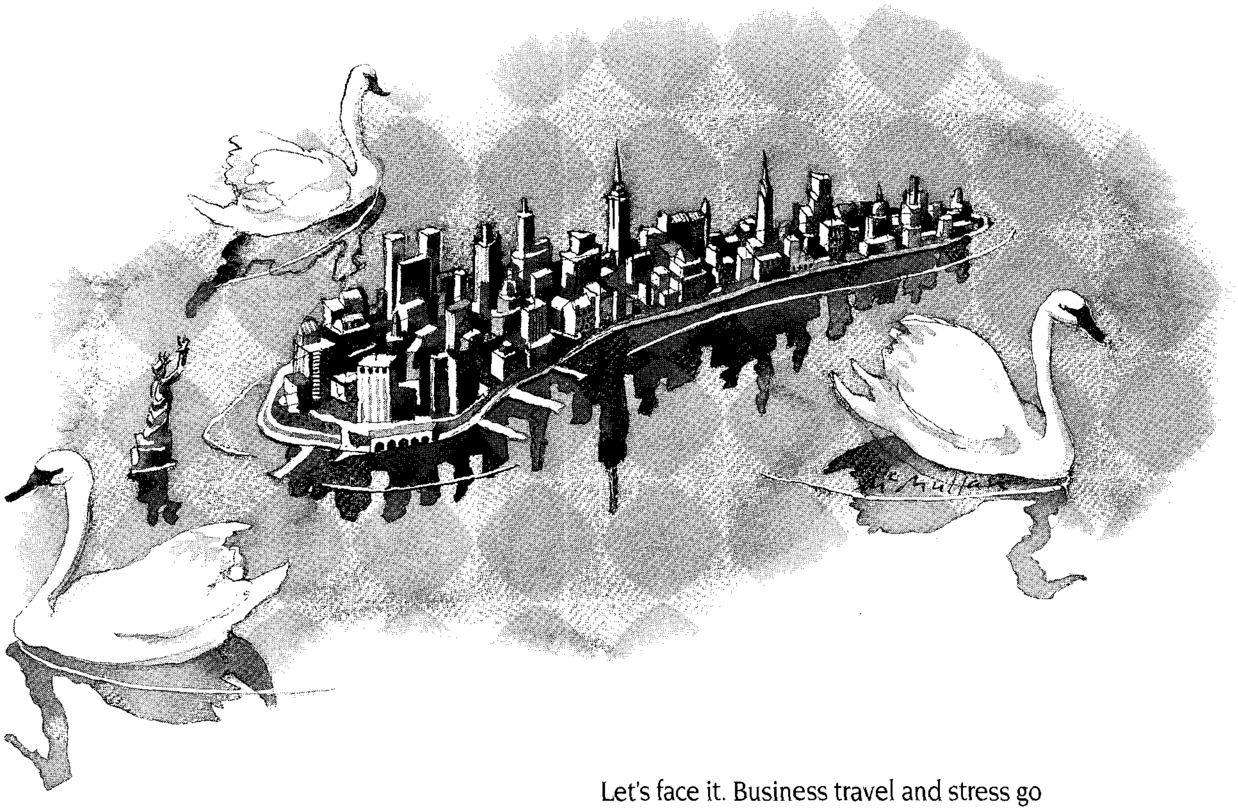

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"Fashion and History: A Dialogue" at the Metropolitan Museum's Costume Institute

MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

ART

Color Her Barbra

WE'VE all seen Andy Warhol's silk-screened images of Marilyn, Jackie, Liz, and Elvis, but where, oh, where, is Barbra? Why did Streisand, an instant icon if ever there was one, not make it into Andy's pantheon of non-commissioned portrait subjects? According to Deborah Kass, the reason is simple: Both are eternal outsiders—like a pair of barge horses pursuing the canal, setting the pace at a remove. Warhol, furthermore, was no multiculturalist when it came to proboscises: "Before and After," his famous painting of a nose-job advertisement, is interpreted by some as a reference to the artist's own experience of plastic surgery.

With her current show, a room full of silk-screened paintings à la Warhol (Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer Street; through January 9), Kass has united her unconventional heroes. On view are works from two groups, titled "The Jewish Jackie Series" and "My Elvis," and in each the image is Barbra—in profile, from one of her sixties TV specials, and in full drag as Yentl the Yeshiva Boy, from a still of the more recent movie. Kass considers these funny, revisionist multiples to be at once homages and idealized self-portraits.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Fashion and History: A Dialogue" is the first installation in the redesigned Costume Institute. . . . ¶ Part 2 of "The Century of Tung Ch'i-ch'ang" explores the pioneering abstractionist's influence on artists of the later seventeenth century. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Twenty-five examples of elaborately inscribed and decorated medieval Islamic garments. Through March 14. . . . ¶ "Drawing for Design" includes sketches and finished pieces by designers, architects, and artists from Christopher Dresser to Robert Venturi. . . . ¶ "The Royal City of Susa: Ancient Near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre." Two hundred works in copper, bronze, stone, and clay. Through March 7. . . . ¶ The show of paintings, drawings, and sculpture from the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille, includes works by Rubens, Goya, Delacroix, van Gogh, Fra Bartolommeo, and others. Through Jan. 17. . . . ¶ Two series of color photographs by Shomei Tomatsu: one depicts *Sakura,* or cherry-blossom time; the other, flotsam and jetsam washed up on a beach. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ The museum's Christmas tree and Neapolitan crèche are on view. Through Jan. 10. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, from 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—The Matisse retrospective is organized into seven sections that are at once chronological and thematic. The most powerful section, over all, is the one covering the years 1913 to 1917, which is called "Abstraction and Experimentation." A big, subdued, rigorous Jungian masterpiece called "Bathers by a River" (completed in 1916), for instance, from the Art Institute of Chicago, is the great coup de theatre of this rich but surprisingly unrevealing exhibition. There are, however, some happy rediscoveries, such as a number of Matisse's exercises in bold contours and high style from the early forties—paintings like "The Rumanian Blouse," which may have inspired a collection or two by Saint Laurent, and several still-lifes and interiors with figures against black gridded grounds. Some of the great late cutouts are disappointing. In fact, this exhibition doesn't begin or end with a bang. Through Jan. 19. (Plan wisely; call 708-9850 for ticket information. Tickets can be purchased in advance, and a limited number of same-day tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis.). . . ¶ Since many of the museum's major works are on reciprocal loan to other museums in exchange for Matisses, the museum has chosen to reinstall a number of its remaining paintings, sculptures, and other objects in a non-chronological fashion. There are several informative passages, such as Picasso's sexually charged "Demoiselles" and de Kooning's fierce "Woman I" displayed next to Louise Bourgeois' defiant, ironically erect "Sleeping Figure." Likewise, there is a welcome mixing of mediums, such as Bellmer's "La Poupée," a book with surrealistic pictures of body parts, displayed beside a realistic Robert Gober leg. Still, many of the juxtapositions are far less revealing than they were presumably intended to be. . . . ¶ Jana Štěrbák's new "Projects" installation, "Sisyphus II," consists of an egg-shaped metal sculpture and a black-and-white film. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ "New Photography 8." Through Jan. 12. (See photography listings.). . . ¶ "The Artist and the Book in Twentieth-Century Italy." Through Feb. 16. (Museum hours through Jan. 19: open Sundays through Tuesdays, Fridays, except Christmas, and Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Wednesdays, 12 to 6; Thursdays, 10:30 to 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-32." This large exhibition is an extraordinary—and extraordinarily frustrating—effort. It suggests artists' endless aesthetic disagreements, as well as the perpetual struggle between the élitism of the plastic arts and the populism of the applied arts. This legendary period is evoked with experimental paintings of every level of quality, with a tantalizing variety of revolutionary posters, textiles, and porcelains, and with several superb architectural drawings and models. Other noteworthy—and less familiar—works include the captivating constructivo-figurative paintings of Anna Leporskaia, Il'ia Chashnik's delicate Suprematist watercolors, a pair of severe Nikolai Suetins on plywood, and Georgii Zel'ma's photographs of ethnic revolutionaries. The spirit of Tatlin is everywhere here, though his work is almost nowhere to be seen. Through Jan. 3. (Open daily, except Thursdays, Christmas, and New Year's Day, from 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Works that Robert Rauschenberg made between 1949 and 1954, before the appearance of the groundbreaking combines. As a young man working in New York, at North Carolina's Black Mountain College, and in Europe and North Africa, where he travelled for seven months with his friend Cy Twombly, Rauschenberg was already doing almost everything: painting, sculpture, collage, and photography, of course, but also Conceptual art works *avant la lettre* and all sorts of experiments in mediums ranging

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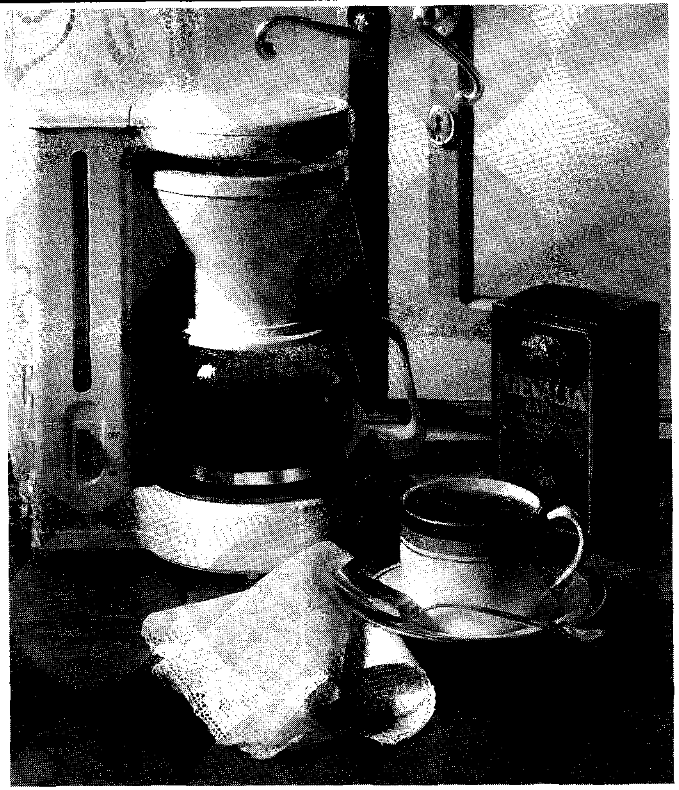

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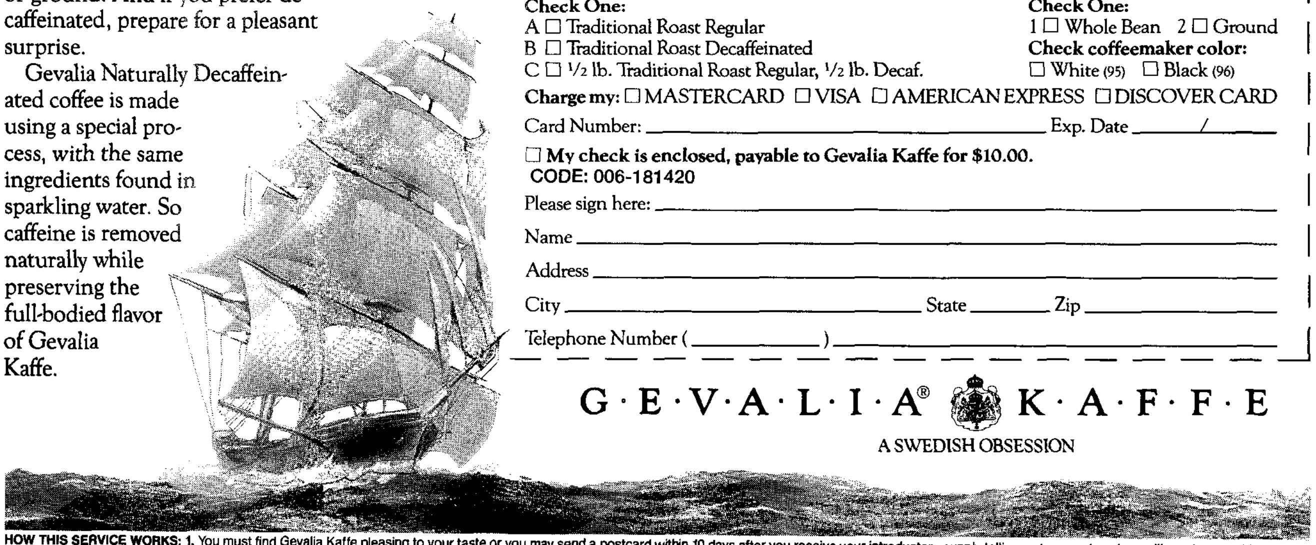

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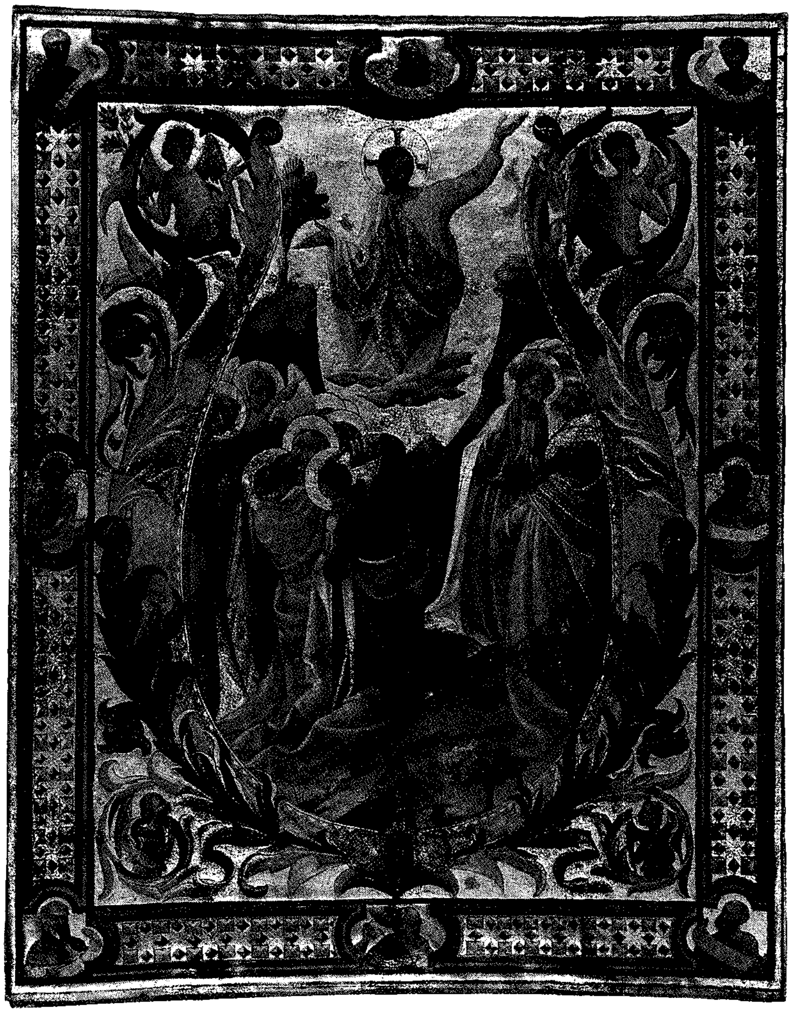
ART—Cont'd

from newsprint to blueprints. His work has influenced many artists of his own generation (Warhol, Johns) and of the two that have arisen since (Rosenquist; David Salle and Cady Noland). Through Jan. 25. . . . ¶ "Marc Chagall and the Jewish Theatre." Chagall's murals for the State Jewish Chamber Theatre, in Moscow, are in many ways ambitious, but they are not especially satisfying. They are notable for their delicacy, for their mixture of figurative and abstract forms, and for the essentially modest scale of their elements. Through Jan. 17. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, Christmas, and New Year's Day, from 11 to 6. Closes at 5 on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Agnes Martin didn't achieve her mature style until the early sixties, when she was in her late forties. Today, she is one of the great living painters, yet her work is so unassuming that she has not attracted the sort of cultish attention given to her fellow desert escapee Georgia O'Keeffe. It is the paradox of Martin's career that she has made soft, delicate paintings in a rigid grid format. Within her narrow vocabulary, Martin explores infinite variation. Though each painting is a perfect distillation of her œuvre, the more you see, the more you want to see. Through Jan. 31. . . . ¶ In providing a historical context for the Martin show, "The Geometric Tradition in American Art, 1930-1990" includes work by Ellsworth Kelly, Ad Reinhardt, Donald Judd, and Burgoyne Diller. Through Feb. 14. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings by Jean-Michel Basquiat. Through Feb. 14. . . . ¶ "Photography: Expanding a Collection" includes works by Cindy Sherman, Sally Mann, and Ana Mendieta. (Open Wednesdays and Fridays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, except Dec. 24 and Dec. 31, from 1 to 8. Closes at 5 on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.)



Illuminated manuscripts at the Morgan Library

BERNARD H. BRESLAUER COLLECTION

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Frédéric Bazille: Prophet of Impressionism." Bazille (1841-70) lived only long enough to brush up to early Impressionism. He was an exact contemporary of Renoir and Monet, and he worked closely with them when he was a truant medical student in Paris. Bazille's virtuosity as an Impressionist is perhaps most evident in "The Rose Laurels," a small painting of flowering bushes that, though signed, is obviously unfinished. There are, however, at least three outstanding Bazilles in Brooklyn, and they have in common a theme surprising for that heyday of the female nude: "The Improvised Field Hospital" is a portrait of Monet, as *homme fatal*, in bed after a minor accident, while "Fisherman with a Net" and "Summer Scene (Bathers)" are not only the cool Bazille's most impassioned works but also bracing homoerotic retorts to everyone else's *déjeuners sur l'herbe*. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "Max Weber: The Cubist Decade, 1910-20." Sixty paintings and works on paper by the American modernist. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Sixty sculptures by Auguste Rodin have been reinstalled in the Cantor Gallery. Among the works here are two independent pieces from "The Gates of Hell"; maquettes, studies, and four full-scale figures from "The Burghers of Calais"; and several versions of "Balzac.". . . ¶ "Dame of the Narrows" (1976), a large-scale sculpture of the Staten Island ferry arriving at the Manhattan terminal, is on view. It's a collaboration between two artists, Red Grooms and Mimi Gross, and the Ruckus Construction Company, a team of artists and engineers. You can go aboard the structure, and, once you're there, the boat starts rocking, waves rise, and seagulls above go crazy. Mr. Grooms has also made two new large murals depicting the Brooklyn, Manhattan, and New Jersey skylines. . . . ¶ Meg Webster's installation, titled "Running," consists of a stream of water and an adjacent resource room with a computer and books on ecology. Through Jan. 3. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, from 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"This Is the American Earth," a show that highlights environmental concerns through landscape photographs by such artists as Ansel Adams, Margaret Bourke-White, Eliot Porter, Jacob Riis, and Minor White. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ The museum's annual origami tree is on view through Jan. 11. (Open daily, except Christmas, from 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Cultures at Crossroads: Southeast Asian Textiles from the Australian National Gallery." Seventy-nine objects, dating from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth, from Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Through Jan. 17. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, except Dec. 24, Christmas, Dec. 31, and New Year's Day, from 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Revolution, Life, and Labor," a show of two hundred and fifty Soviet porcelain plates, vessels, and sculptures, from the Bolshevik Revolution to *glasnost*. . . . ¶ "From Background to Foreground" examines Jean-Baptiste Réveillon's eighteenth-century wallpaper designs and includes samples of the arabesque pattern, woodblocks, paper, pigment, and decorative objects. . . . ¶ "The Power of Maps." Navigating your way through this huge show of more than four hundred maps (the earliest is from 1500 B.C.) can seem like a daunting task. But be adventurous, and you'll find Native American star charts, Italian globes, Aboriginal "Dreaming" maps, survey maps of the Pyramids, and much more. . . . ¶ A show of drawings, prints, textiles, and wall coverings by designers and architects who have died of AIDS. Through Feb. 28. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, from 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St.—A permanent installation of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain from the fifteenth century to the nineteenth is on view. (Open daily, except Mondays, Dec. 24, Christmas, and New Year's Day, from 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—A display of decorative metalwork, cloisonné, and lacquerware from the Meiji period (1868-1912). Through Jan. 10. (Open daily, except Mondays, Dec. 24, Christmas, and New Year's Day, from 11 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Dickens' manuscript for "A Christmas Carol," a hundred and forty-nine years old this winter, is on display. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ More than a hundred medieval and Renaissance manuscript illuminations from the Breslauer Collection are on view. . . . ¶ "Printers and Miniaturists" shows off the finest in late-fifteenth-century Venetian illuminated books. . . . ¶ In "Thomas Jefferson: Tranquil Pursuits and Stormy Politics," one can see "Summary View of the Rights of America" (1774), his first published work; the library's copy of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence; personal letters to Elbridge Gerry (later v.p. under Madison); and letters to his daughter Martha. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, from 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—"Mother Goose in New York," an exhibition of nineteenth-century juvenile books and woodblocks from the presses of McLoughlin Bros. Through Dec. 27. . . . ¶ Nearly two hundred nineteenth-century board games—from the Majestic Game of the Asiatic Ostrich to Telegraph Boy to the Checkered Game of Life—in a show called "Victorian Pleasures." Through Jan. 3. . . . ¶ Twenty panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt are on view. Organized in collaboration with the NAMES Project Foundation. Through Jan. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, except Dec. 24, Christmas, Dec. 31, and New Year's Day, from 11 to 5; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Four hundred years' worth of prints and photographs portraying Native Americans. Included are works by Timothy O'Sullivan, George Catlin, Edward S. Curtis, and Gertrude Käsebier. Through Jan. 30. (Third Floor Gallery.). . .¶ In "New Worlds, Ancient Texts," more than two hundred manuscripts, maps, atlases, globes, books, and prints tell the story of the Old World and the New World—how they came to meet, their courtship, their quarrels, and their inevitable marriage. Through Jan. 9. (Gottesman Hall.). . . ¶ Maps and atlases of yesteryear, in "Mapping the New World." Through Jan. 9. (Edna Barnes Salomon Room.). . . ¶ On view in the Berg Collection are fifty manuscripts, including fragments from "Oliver Twist," "Tropic of Cancer," "To the Lighthouse," and "Ada." (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays through Saturdays, except Christmas, Dec. 26, New Year's Day, and Jan. 2, from 10 to 6. Closes at 5 on Dec. 24 and Dec. 31.)

P.S. 1 Museum, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"Postcards from Alphaville: Jean-Luc Godard in Contemporary Art, 1963-92." This show (which runs concurrently with the Godard film-and-video retrospective at MOMA) explores the avant-gardist's influence on artists from Barbara Bloom and Donald Baechler to Allan Ruppersberg and Mary Weatherford. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ In "7 Rooms / 7 Shows," this institution's traditional emphasis on emerging artists shifts to emerging curators. The whole second floor thus becomes the site for seven distinct group shows. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ A new series of photographs by Clegg & Guttmann titled "From the Index of Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Photographic Portraits." Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ "The Bells," Donald Lipski's new sculpture-with-sound installation. Through Jan. 10. . . . ¶ Three sound-and-video installations by Berlin artists Hans-Peter Kuhn, Ulrich Eller, and Niko Tenten. Through Jan. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, except Christmas and New Year's Day; noon to 6.)

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—A retrospective of paintings, watercolors, drawings, and textile designs by Lois Mailou Jones. Through Jan. 3. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Fridays and Saturdays, except Christmas, Dec. 26, New Year's Day, and Jan. 2, from 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"Wifredo Lam and His Contemporaries, 1938-52." More than a hundred works by a Cuban modernist of African, Chinese, and Spanish ancestry. Lam was an early multi-culti, the first artist to turn the sometimes condescending primitivism of modern art on its ear. . . . **Note:** Another show of Lam's work is at Galerie Lelong (20 W. 57th St.) through Dec. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. They will be closed Christmas and New Year's Day.)

Richard Diebenkorn / Andy Warhol (1930-87)—Eleven paintings (1968 to 1985) from the Ocean Park series. Diebenkorn, along with de Kooning, is the last artist left who sustains the grand authority of American abstract painting of the fifties. He has, however, taken some ribbing for essentially making the same painting over and over, which in a certain sense is a legitimate accusation. But, as this show demonstrates, there is also great variation in his paintings. Through Jan. 19. / A show of drawings from the mid-eighties. Through Jan. 9. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2. . . . ¶ A show of late paintings by Warhol is at Gagosian's downtown space. See SoHo listings.)

Short List—William Blake, Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays; closed Dec. 24-26; through Dec. 31); **Peter Cain,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 28); **Wilhelm Lehmbruck,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2; through Jan. 16).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Pat Steir—A magisterial show of the artist's new "Waterfall" paintings, with new vibrant colors like ultramarine and an unfathomably deep, seasoned red. Through Dec. 31. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Closed Dec. 26.)

"Josef Hoffmann: Designs"—Two hundred drawings and a hundred objects by the designer, architect, and co-founder of the *Wiener Werkstätte*. The wide range of work includes furniture, architectural models, fabrics, and bookbindings. All of the pieces are on loan from the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts. Through Jan. 23. (IBM Gallery of Science and Art, Madison Ave. at 56th St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

Short List—Richard Baker, Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26; through Jan. 16); **José Bedia,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Dec. 31); **Stuart Davis,** Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St. (closed Dec. 23-26, Dec. 31, Jan. 2, and Jan. 5; through Jan. 23); **Luis Gordillo,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 2); **Dan Graham,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Jan. 2); **Leon Kroll,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26-Jan. 2; through Jan. 9); **Walt Kuhn,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (closed Dec. 24-26; through Dec. 30); **Louis Lozowick,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26; through Dec. 31); **Giorgio Morandi,** Baldacci-Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26-Jan. 2; through Jan. 30); **Zoran Music,** Krugier, 41 E. 57th St. (closed Dec. 23-Jan. 2; through Jan. 30); **Fairfield Porter,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.

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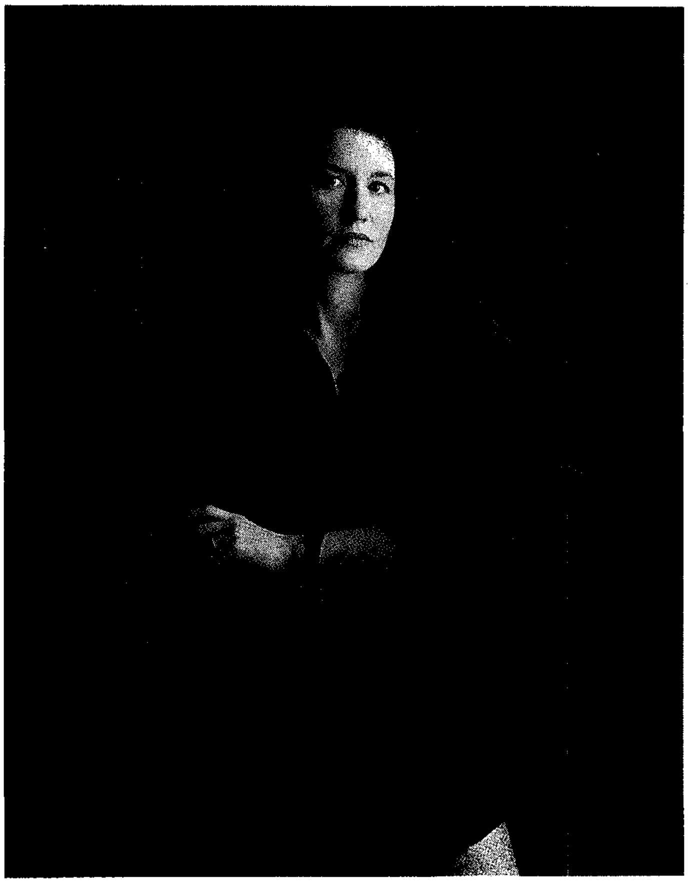
(closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 23); **ROBERT RYMAN,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26, Dec. 29, Jan. 2, and Jan. 5; through Jan. 9); **ART SPIEGELMAN,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 9); **LEONARD STOKES AND JOE NICASTRI,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays; closed Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31, and Jan. 2; through Jan. 9).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Karen Finley—This performance artist, whose stage work is always about one sort of oppression or another, has created an AIDS memorial that shares many of the qualities that give the AIDS quilt its power: anti-monumentality, impermanence, fragility, and a dependence on the combined efforts of innumerable people. In the basement of this gallery, Finley has placed mounds of sand into which visitors are invited to write the names of the dead and then to erase them in a private, ritualized act of release. Through Jan. 9. (Lipton, 67 Prince St. Closed Dec. 23-Jan. 5.)

Mike Kelley—The artist has scoured the world of wacko do-it-yourself catalogues for rooms of confinement, torture tables, and even a deep-colonics board. There's a whistle-while-you-work hominess to these spare-time perversities. "Private Address System," a foil to all the recent discussions about free speech, is the defining piece of the show. It consists of a portable toilet with two microphones in the bowl producing continuous wailing feedback. Through Jan. 9. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2.)



Karen Finley at the Lipton gallery

TIMOTHY GREENFIELD-SANDERS

Andrew Lord—This forty-two-year-old English potter has ranged widely among his medium's conventions, sometimes exercising Cubist control, at other times invoking the aesthetic of homeliness perfected by Far Eastern ceramic traditions and, in this country, by George Ohr. In this show, there are no right angles and straight lines but instead a sort of wonky, baroque classicism and, for a change, a lot of color glazes—roseate tones, iridescent beiges, deep green, blazing turquoise. Through Jan. 9. (65 Thompson Street Gallery. Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2.)

Ken Lum—Perhaps in an attempt to duplicate the effect of his early furniture pieces, this artist has tossed humongous cushions about the gallery in a casually violent way. Their sheer scale is momentarily startling, but works of art they're not. And his attempts at painting substitutes—primed white canvases with little photos silk-screened onto them—come off like second-rate neo-conceptualism. Through Jan. 16. (Rosen, 130 Prince St. Closed Dec. 24-31.)

Odd Nerdrum—Pretentious, ponderous, operatic works so thickly encrusted toward the bottom it's as if the weight of all that schmalz had caused a landslide on the canvas. These are clearly tongue-in-cheek works, with their flabby, deformed, and deranged heroes, but irony is little recompense for the plodding manpower that so obviously went into

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* All rates subject to availability. Restrictions apply.

their making. Through Jan. 16. (Thorp, 103 Prince St. Closed Dec. 24-31.)

Richard Onyango—This Kenyan artist makes infectiously charming paintings on canvas in a velvet-painting style. Many are of Africa on the move—buses, trucks, safari caravans, and burning planes. All are autobiographical, and there are many paintings of the artist's voluptuous white lover, Dr. Souzy Drosie, who died at the height of their storybook romance. These paintings have the sweep of panoramas, broad enough to contain Drosie, a consummate sexual being. The weirdest paintings here—which were derived from actual dreams—depict angels leading Drosie away from her distraught lover. The autobiographical text in the accompanying catalogue is as delightful as the paintings and shares their sense of accidental brilliance. Thanks to its idiosyncratic English, it has a touch of the surrealism of Raymond Roussel as well. Through Dec. 31. (Ala, 560 Broadway. Closed Dec. 24-26.)

Gerhard Richter—Two small canvases, and a goodly sampling of works on paper from the past several years. The abstract watercolors are quite beautiful, but especially engaging are some small drawings that map out the anatomy of the artist's large abstract paintings using the idiom of the pencil. There is also a group of mysterious black-and-white photographic works of murky multiple exposures of the artist in his studio. They were made at the same time as his out-of-focus grisaille paintings of the alleged suicide of the leaders of the Baader-Meinhof gang. Through Jan. 30. (Nolan-Eckman, 560 Broadway. Closed Dec. 26 and Dec. 29-31.)

Andy Warhol (1930-87)—A fascinating show of an essentially unknown body of work. Made shortly before he died, these paintings illustrate the two sides of Warhol: the detached, cool materialist, and the less frequently glimpsed visionary. They also show the influence of the artist's collaboration with Jean-Michel Basquiat—not just in their style (the anatomical chartings, the writing, even the very orthography) but in their youthful vigor and self-obsession. These are among Warhol's most autobiographical works. The images, mostly rooted in advertisements and spanning his entire career, filter his own quarter-century engagement with the media, urban life, and violence through his influence on eighties artists. Through Jan. 30. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2. . . . ¶ A show of related drawings is at Gagosian's uptown space, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St., through Jan. 9.)

"Ageometry"—Mary Heilmann, the den mother of post-grid painting, is represented by several lacklustre works, while Karin Davie, the new arrival, seems afflicted with too much energy. Her nearly identical works are made of big wavy horizontal lines, unbroken from the top to the bottom of the canvas. They are so monotonous they could make one seasick. The charmer is a huge, wacky painting by Gary Lang, composed of horizontal and vertical ribbons of color that were clearly crosshatched by hand: by the time Lang reached the edge of his grid, whoops! he had goofed big time—his grid slants like the tower of Pisa, and he has left this massive matrix of undulating color in a welcome state of imperfection. Through Jan. 9. (Klein, 594 Broadway. Closed Dec. 24-Dec. 31.)

"La Tinaia" / "Hands of Time"—Recent art by the patients of San Salvi, a psychiatric hospital in Florence, Italy. (La Tinaia—"the vats"—is the name of the hospital's center for expressive activity, taken because the group's studio is an old wine-making house.) Perhaps not surprisingly, institutionalized Italians do it just like the insane everywhere else; there's a full range of styles here, from the intense color juxtapositions of the expressionist to the single-mindedness of one who draws the same object over and over until the paper is full. / A different kind of obsessiveness is visible downstairs, where work made by men in various American prisons is on view. Most of the drawing is fascinating, if amateurish. The subject matter is rather limited: tattoos, skulls, devils, barred windows, executions. The work of a lifer like Daniel (Stretch) Watson is especially disturbing, whether in his drawings of semis buried in canyons or in his demonically glaring self-portraits. There are also some objects made out of the few raw materials at hand: toilet paper, soap, and small rocks (some carved with the intricacy of netsuke), and bags and crucifixes and photo albums made from old cigarette packs—these guys can do a lot with a Camel wrapper. Through Jan. 23. (Kind, 136 Greene St. Closed Jan. 2.)

Short List—**jennifer bartlett,** Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2; through Jan. 16); **robert beauchamp,** Zarre, 154 Wooster St. (through Jan. 16); **adolf benca,** M-13, at 72 Greene St. (closed Dec. 24 and Dec. 31; through Jan. 2); **dale chihuly,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (closed Dec. 24-26, Dec. 31, and Jan. 2; through Jan. 23); **don eddy,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (closed Dec. 26; through Jan. 6); **keith haring,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2; through Jan. 16); **ed and nancy kienholz,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (closed Dec. 26; through Jan. 2); **christian philipp müller,** American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St. (closed Dec. 26-Jan. 2; through Dec. 31); **saul steinberg,** Pace, 142 Greene St. (closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 9); **jenny watson,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (closed Dec. 26; through Dec. 31).

PHOTOGRAPHY

Baby Faces

Babies haven't exactly been where the action is in photography. Perhaps this is because photographers know that, if one doesn't have a personal connection to them, pictures of infants can be as much of a snore as slide shows of other people's vacations. There have been a few photographers, however, who have taken on the baby-picture challenge and produced images of wider interest. Diane Arbus's crying-child portrait—a psychologically deep image that brilliantly captured the state of dependency—is one example that comes to mind.

Now there's a whole series, by a French photographer, Suzanne Lafont, that succeeds in expressing what it's like to be a newcomer to the world. The series was shot in 1987, and five of the pictures can be seen as part of a group show at Marian Goodman (24 West 57th Street; open Mondays, through January 2). These Lafonts depict three different little girls (two to three years old) sitting in a garden. They are beautiful without being sentimental, and they combine peacefulness and anxiety. In four of the images, a child sits on a chair, seemingly all alone; she's not, of course—we know that Lafont, at least, had to be there, to take the pictures. But that's logic, and these portraits are compelling precisely because they describe life before this kind of logic is an option. They have tension because of their movement—the viewer can't help worrying, for instance, that the child will fall to the ground. And then what?

Gustave Le Gray (1820-82) / **Robert Adams**—Two groups of seascapes, taken about a hundred and forty years apart, that are breathtaking, both for their drama and for their technical beauty. In Le Gray's luminous images, the

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horizon line stimulates the viewer's imagination. Robert Adams' contemporary pictures were shot in the region of Oregon where the Columbia River meets the Pacific. They are so articulate that the waves seem to undulate in their frames. Also on view is a Le Gray series of luscious photographs, all in different tones, of Millet's copy of the "Mona Lisa." Through Jan. 30. (Lowinsky, 575 Broadway. Closed Dec. 26.)

"PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 19TH CENTURY"—Sixty photos from the first sixty years of the medium. Artists include Carleton Watkins, Julia Margaret Cameron, Félix Teynard, and Eadweard Muybridge. Through Jan. 23. (Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Closed Dec. 26.)

"1992: PHOTOGRAPHS SELECTED FROM THE FILES OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS"—It's rare to see newspaper photographs treated as though they were worthy of exhibition, let alone preservation. In the gallery setting, we get to see them without surrounding print or attention-grabbing headlines, in a larger scale, and mostly in color, which changes the feeling of the pictures immeasurably. Some of the photographs are what you might expect—images of tragic, violent events, and, most formulaic of all, sports shots. But plenty of the photos are genuine finds, both for the information they contain and for how they look. Through Jan. 2. (Lee, 588 Broadway. Closed Dec. 26.)

"NEW PHOTOGRAPHY 8"—This MOMA series has dramatically expanded, and now includes eight artists instead of the customary three. The work varies widely in approach and in strength. It's hard to understand, for instance, why Mary Miss has been included, since her architectural photographs seem to be just travel versions of similar work done by another sculptor/photographer, Gordon Matta-Clark, more than twenty years ago. But it's wonderful to see the imagery of Darrel Ellis getting its due. His use of his father's family pictures makes for autobiographical works that are both tender and upsetting. Through Jan. 12. (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. Open Sundays through Tuesdays, Fridays, except Christmas, and Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Wednesdays, 12 to 6; Thursdays, 10:30 to 9.)

"TROUBLED TIMES. . ."—This show features three artists whose street photography is legendary—Lisette Model, Louis Faurer, and Leon Levinstein. Almost all the works were shot in New York. Model's forties wartime pictures are images of loss, and of emotionally and physically wounded people, and Faurer's images, many of them from the mid-fifties, depict urban down-and-outs. Levinstein's photographs, from the late fifties and early sixties, document the early stages of the urban alienation and abandonment that have since become so widespread in the city. Through Jan. 31. (Sander, 105 Hudson St. Closed Dec. 24-Jan. 2.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"American Legends," an exhibition of recent portraits by Yousuf Karsh, of such people as Cesar Chavez, Dave Brubeck, Jim Henson, and Mother Clara Hale. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ Early black-and-white work by Ernst Haas. Through Jan. 24. . . . ¶ "Small Town America: The Missouri Photo Workshops—1949-91." Through Jan. 24. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—**ELLEN CAREY,** Baum, 588 Broadway (closed Dec. 24-26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 9); **JEAN KALLINA** and **JAN HENLE,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 16); **HIROJI KUBOTA,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through Jan. 31); **MARTIN MUNKACSI** and **LILLIAN BASSMAN,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. (closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2; through Jan. 16); **RODNEY SMITH,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (closed Dec. 26; through Jan. 16); **WEEGEE,** Borden, 560 Broadway (closed Dec. 24-26, and Dec. 29; through Jan. 16).

MUSIC

Boxing Day

If you look forward to having some thirty-five to eighty-five hours to spend in contemplation of a musical acquisition, two recent releases compete for your attention. Philips Classics has gathered in one box all the video versions of Wagner's operas that the company has made to date at the Bayreuth Festival (available around town for about seven-hundred-and-twenty dollars on laser disc, four hundred dollars on videotape; the laser version weighs about twenty-five pounds). The conductors include Colin Davis, Daniel Barenboim, and Pierre Boulez; the directors, Patrice Chéreau, Götz Friedrich, Harry Kupfer, and Jean-Pierre Ponnelle. These are important documents of Wagner interpretation and theatrical innovation in our time, captured, for the most part, in superb sound and color.

That is the thirty-five-hour item. For the heartier appetite, RCA Victor Gold Seal has completed its reissue of the RCA commercial recordings of Arturo Toscanini, made between 1920 and 1954, on eighty-two compact discs. (The current price at major retailers in town, including hardwood display cabinet, is eight hundred dollars; the set weighs about forty-five pounds.) These are key documents of orchestral music-making and interpretive genius in the first half of our century, captured in mostly lousy (but here much improved) sound of nevertheless unforgettable vitality.

If these collections sound pricey, think of it this way: A pair of the best seats for one cycle of Wagner's "Ring" this season at the Metropolitan Opera would cost you sixteen hundred dollars.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; and for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800.)

HOLIDAY MUSIC

Brick Church Chorale—David Weadon directs Part One of Handel's "Messiah." (Park Ave. at 91st St. Dec. 24 at 10 P.M. No tickets necessary.)

Ensemble for Early Music—Frederick Renz directs "Christesmas in Anglia," a seasonal survey of English and Scottish music from the twelfth century to the seventeenth. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Dec. 26 at 8 and Dec. 27 at 3. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Masterwork Chorus and Orchestra—David Randolph believes that in his thirty-eight years at the helm of the Masterwork Chorus he may have achieved the world record for number of "Messiah"'s conducted. Since he will retire at the end of the current season, this "Messiah"—his hundred-and-sixty-sixth—will be his last (at least for the nonce). Soloists for this now-or-never event will be soprano Louise Wohlafka, mezzo-soprano Janice Meyerson, tenor Michael Best, and bass Michael Burt. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 27 at 2:30.)

D'Amici Trio—Hanukkah songs and selections from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker," as arranged by Ilan Rechtman. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Dec. 27 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Artek Ensemble—Gwendolyn Toth directs the period-instrument ensemble in Christmas music from seventeenth-century Germany, including sacred works by Michael Praetorius, Johann Hermann Schein, Matthias Weckmann, Franz Tunder, and—as the program's keystone—Heinrich Schütz's endlessly adorable "Weihnachts-historia"; with soprano Evelyn Simon, countertenor Daniel Gundlach, tenor David Frye, and bass Paul Shipper. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. Dec. 27, Dec. 29, and Dec. 31, all at 8. For information about tickets, call 873-0473.)

National Choral Council—The organization's twenty-fifth annual "Messiah" sing-along, with twenty-three conductors taking their turn at the podium. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 28 at 7:30. Bring your own score or buy one at the door.)

Carillon—The seventy-four bronze bells of the Riverside Church will ring out to greet 1993, overseen by resident carillonneur and campanologist Joseph Clair Davis. Dec. 31 at 10 P.M.: Carols, organ transcriptions, and Mr. Davis's own "Suite for Sixteen Great English Bells," written expressly for the sixteen large bells that remain from the church's original carillon. . . . ¶ At midnight: The "Swinging Peal," in which the carillon's five largest bells are disengaged from the instrument and reattached to motorized wheels that swing at random; to which cacophony Mr. Davis provides a manual counterpoint with the remaining bells of the carillon. (Riverside Dr. at 120th St., and anywhere in the vicinity thereof.)

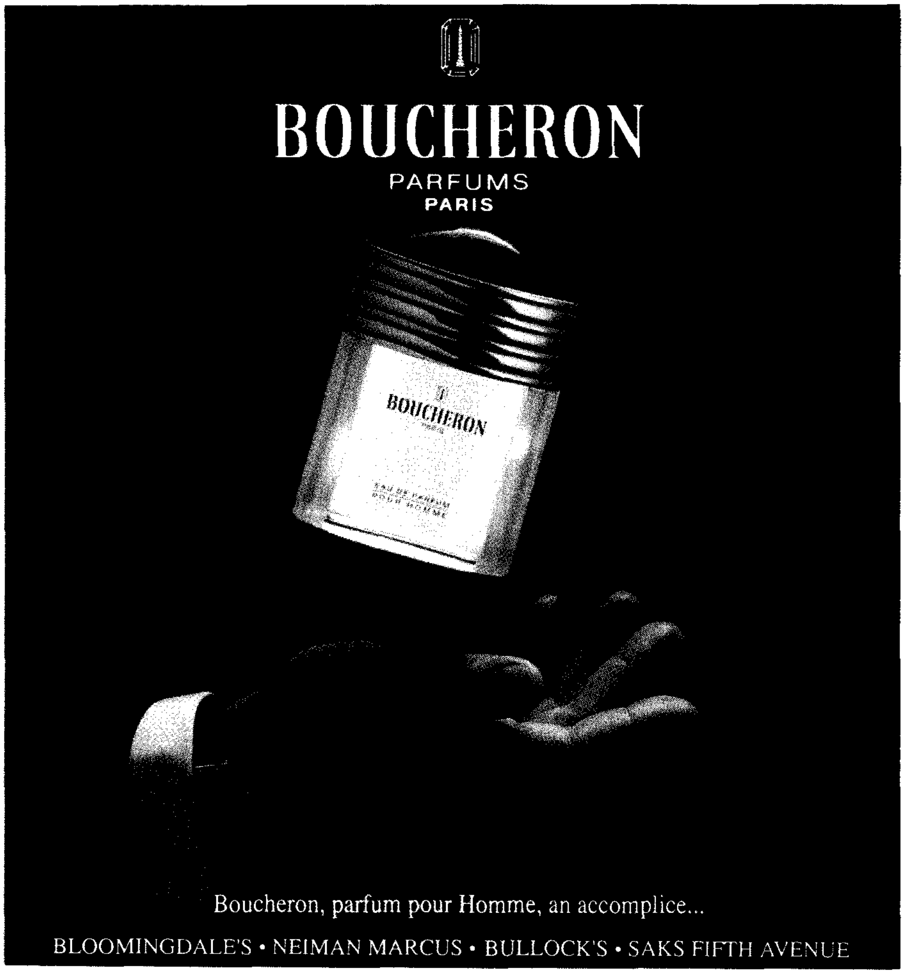
OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**JENŮFA,** with Gabriela Beňačková, Leonie Rysanek, Ben Heppner, and Jacque Trussel; conducted by James Conlon. (Dec. 23 at 8 and Dec. 26 at 1:30.). . . With Gabriela Beňačková, Anja Silja, Ben Heppner, and Jacque Trussel; James Conlon. (Dec. 29 at 8.). . . With Gabriela Beňačková, Leonie Rysanek, Gary Lakes, and Jacque Trussel; James Conlon. (Jan. 2 at 8.). . . With Gabriela Beňačková, Anja Silja, Gary Lakes, and Jacque Trussel; James Conlon. (Jan. 5 at 8.). . . **LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR,** with June Anderson, Ramon Vargas, Haijing Fu, and Paul Plishka; Marcello Panni. (Dec. 24 at 8.). . . **EUGENE ONEGIN,** with Ljubov Kazarnovskaya, Birgitta Svendén, Neil Rosenshein, Dwayne Croft, and Paul Plishka; James Levine. (Dec. 26 at 8.). . . With Ljubov Kazarnovskaya, Wendy White, Jerry Hadley, Dwayne Croft, and Paul Plishka; James Levine. (Dec. 28 at 8 and Dec. 31 at 7:30.). . . **TOSCA,** with Anna Tomowa-Sintow, Lando Bartolini, and James Morris; Christian Badea. (Jan. 1 and Jan. 4 at 8.). . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Leona Mitchell, Diana Soviero, Richard Leech, and Christopher Robertson; John Fiore. (Dec. 30 at 8 and Jan. 2 at 1:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

Amato Opera Company—Final performances of "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," in a bilingual (Italian and English) version by Anthony Amato, who will conduct. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Dec. 31 and Jan. 2 at 7:30 and Jan. 3 at 2:30, the New Year's Eve performance being a benefit, with a party attached.)

CONCERTS

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. Dec. 30 and Jan. 2 at 8, and Jan. 5 at 7:30: Mendelssohn's "Hebrides" Overture, Dvořák's Violin Concerto (with Elmar Oliveira), Gershwin's "An American in Paris," and the world première of Christopher Rouse's Trombone Concerto (commissioned for the orchestra's ongoing hundred-and-fiftieth-birthday celebration, and here featuring Joseph Alessi). . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 8: Frothy fare for New Year's Eve, including numerous American light classics and Johann Strauss favorites. A benefit concert. . . . ¶ Jan. 2 at 2: Mendelssohn's "Hebrides" Overture and Gershwin's "An American in Paris," followed by a chat between the audience and several of the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MUSIC–Cont'd

Philharmonic's members on the subject of orchestral auditions.

Bargemusic—The New Year's tradition of "Brandenburgs on the Briny" enters its fifteenth year at New York's only floating concert hall. Even with just one on a part, several of Bach's peerless concerti grossi require an ensemble of sixteen, which adds up to quite a crowd on this intimately proportioned stage. Still, everyone has room to bow or blow, and, unless you sit in the front row, you needn't worry about an elbow (or an oboe) meeting your chin. Dec. 24 at 7:30 and Dec. 27 at 4: Concertos No. 1, No. 2, and No. 4. . . . ¶ Dec. 30-31 at 7:30: Concertos No. 3, No. 5, and No. 6. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. . . . **note:** The New Year's Eve performance is a benefit, and, though it will take place on what was once a coffee barge, the evening's beverage is derived from grapes, not beans.)

New York String Orchestra—Alexander Schneider conducts works by Bach, Haydn, Mendelssohn, and Wolf. (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 24 at midnight and Dec. 29 at 8.)

P. D. Q. Bach—Not to be confused with Pedicure Bach, the Father of Modern Chiropody, although listening to the notorious composer's music can occasionally bring to mind the sensation of an ingrown toenail or a particularly irritating bunion. In this year's hanging out of the dirtiest laundry in all of musicology, "Professor" Peter Schickele offers two new P. D. Q. Bach discoveries—"Lip My Reeds" (for four bassoon reeds) and "Fanfare for Fred" (written on commission from the bibulous Prince Fred of the House of Hangover)—as well as some classics: "Six Contrary Dances," "March of the Cute Little Wood Sprites," and "Grand Serenade for an Awful Lot of Winds and Percussion." Members of the New York Pick-Up Ensemble promise to fulfill their roles as the awful lot. Oh, and there will also be a piece written by Mr. Schickele himself: his "Last Tango in Bayreuth," which may be of special interest to Wagnerians with a sense of humor (both of them). (Carnegie Hall. Dec. 26, Dec. 28, and Dec. 30, all at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Jaime Laredo conducts all six of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 27 at 3 and Dec. 31 at 8, with champagne served at the latter.)

Amor Artis Chamber Choir and Orchestra—Johannes Somary directs an all-Bach concert comprising the Orchestral Suite No. 2, the the Second "Brandenburg" Concerto, the Cantata No. 51 (with soprano Cynthia Richards Hewes and trumpeter Martin Berinbaum), and the Magnificat. (St. Jean Baptiste Church, Lexington Ave. at 76th St. Dec. 31 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-4513.)

Daniel Barenboim—The pianist performs works by Schubert: four Impromptus and the late, great Sonata in B-Flat (D. 960). (Avery Fisher Hall. Jan. 4 at 8.)

PAUL COX

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Jets—Vs. the New Orleans Saints, Dec. 26 at 12:30.

Knicks—Vs. the Indiana Pacers, Dec. 29 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Clippers, Jan. 2 at 1. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, Jan. 5 at 7:30.

Nets—Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, Dec. 28 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Devils, Dec. 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Bruins, Dec. 27. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Jan. 4. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Rangers, Dec. 26. . . . ¶ Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, Dec. 29. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota North Stars, Jan. 2. . . . ¶ Vs. the Quebec Nordiques, Jan. 5. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Hartford Whalers, Dec. 27 at 5:05. . . . ¶ Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Jan. 2 at 7:35.

(The Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For tickets, call 1-516 538-6600. The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Dec. 24, Christmas, and Dec. 29, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays, except Dec. 23, Dec. 24, Christmas, and New Year's Day, at 8 and Tuesdays, except Dec. 22, at 1; Sundays at 6:45. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights, except Dec. 31, at 7:30. Post time on Dec. 31 is 1:30. Starts Dec. 26.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

New Year's Firsts—Welcoming the new year in the city that never sleeps? A match made in heaven. Here are some choices; you decide. . . . **first night**—What if you gave a New Year's Eve party and thousands of people showed up, none of whom expected anything alcoholic to drink? Welcome to First Night! Beginning at noon on Dec. 31 and winding up at 1 A.M., at roughly twenty locations around the city, some eighty-five events, including a horse-and-carriage parade, ice skating, waltzing at Grand Central Terminal, and classical-music concerts, will be available to anyone who buys a revellers button. (For more information, call 745-8360.) . . . **first run**—Dec. 31 at midnight: Bring in the New Year with a bang from the starter's gun, at the annual five-mile fun run sponsored by the New York Road Runners Club. Meet at 67th St. and Central Park West. . . . **first burst**—Dec. 31 at midnight: Fireworks in Central Park near W. 67th St., at the South Street Seaport, and in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, near Grand Army Plaza. . . . **first swim**—Jan. 1 at 1 P.M.: Polar Bear Club Ocean Swim. *Cold* water at Coney Island. Meet at the New York Aquarium, the boardwalk and W. 8th St., at Surf Ave. . . . **first words**—Jan. 1 at 2 P.M.: The nineteenth annual New Year's Day marathon reading features more than a hundred writers and performers, who are given the stage for about three minutes each. This combination Poetry Project family reunion and live anthology will wind down at around 11 P.M. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the day of the reading.) . . . **first fruits**—"Kwanzaa" is Swahili for "the first fruit of the harvest." The American Museum of Natural History will commemorate the holiday with an African marketplace, poetry, folktales, traditional games, and dances. (Central Park W. at 79th St. For a complete schedule of events, call 769-5315. Dec. 27, from 11 to 6; Dec. 28, from 1 to 4; and Dec. 29, from 1:30 to 4. No charge beyond museum admission.)

Twelfth Night—The eighth annual Boar's Head and Yule Log Festival at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine includes a mummers

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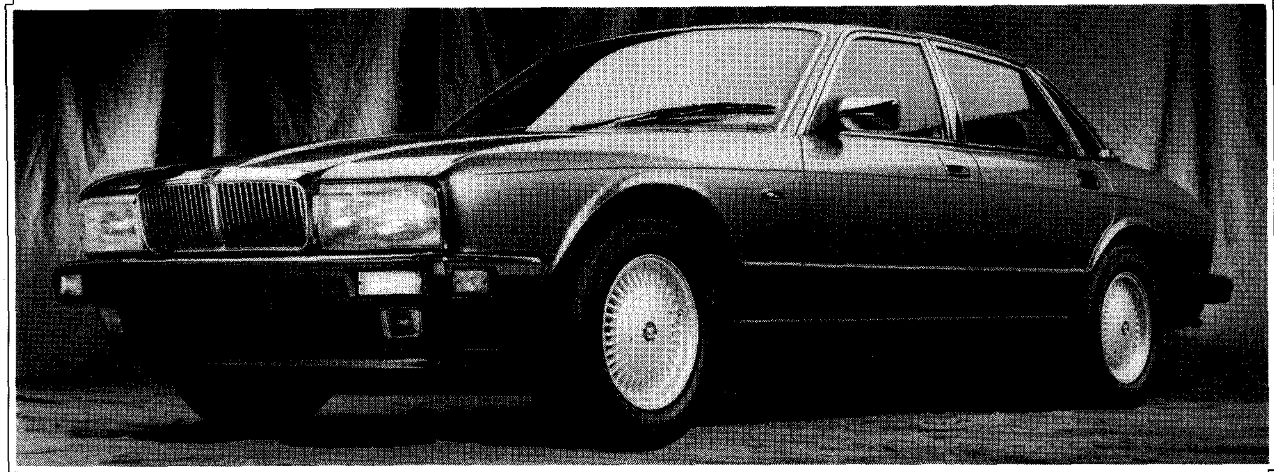

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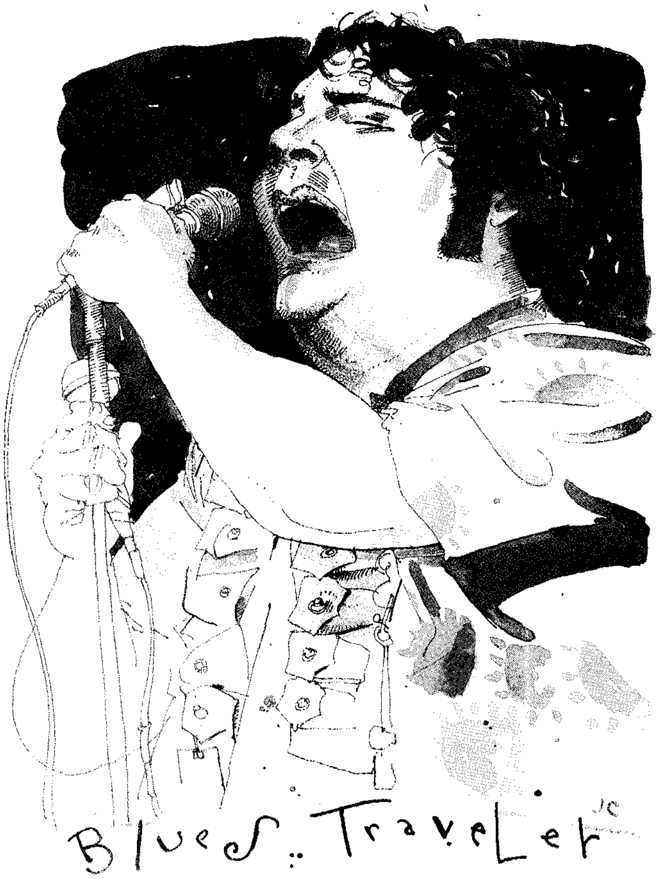

John Popper, of Blues Traveler, at the Paramount

JOE CIARDIELLO

play, processions, mimes, fire-jugglers, bagpipers, dancers—and a huge mincemeat pie. Dig in. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Jan. 1 at 3:30 and Jan. 2 at 3:30 and 7:30. Tickets at the door on the days of the festivities.)

Time Travel—Make a Christmas visit to Historic Richmond Town, the nineteenth-century outpost on Staten Island. Several buildings have been decorated with period ornaments, costumed characters will greet visitors, and the tavern and the tinsmith will be in operation for the Victorian holiday revels. (441 Clarke Ave. 1-718 351-1611. Dec. 26-28, from 1 to 7.)

Conventional Wisdom—As part of its annual convention, the Modern Language Association will present several readings. The following will be among the options. Dec. 28 at 5:15: Cynthia Ozick; Australian writers, including Robert Hughes and Thomas Keneally; and a tribute to Ralph Ellison. . . . Dec. 29 at 5:15: Sandra Cisneros; Richard Wilbur; Asian-American writers, including John Yau and Jessica Hagedorn; and Native American writers, including Paula Gunn Allen. (New York Hilton, 1335 Sixth Ave., at 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Words—Jan. 4 at 7: Gary Indiana, Ann Rower, and David Trinidad will read from their own works. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Jan. 4 at 8: Four actors will present a reading of Janusz Glowacki's new play, "Antigone in New York." (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Jan. 4 at 8: John Mortimer and Wilfrid Sheed will read from their own works. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Walks—Dec. 25 at noon and 2:30: Tour of Jewish New York, including the *Daily Forward* and Shteebel Row, sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For more information, call 439-1090. . . . ¶ Dec. 26-27: Several walks with a Christmas theme, including holiday cheer (a tour of historic bars and taverns), haunted Greenwich Village, and a visit to the site of Clement C. Moore's house in Chelsea; sponsored by Sidewalks of New York. For more information and schedules, call 517-0201. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 2: Midtown architectural styles sampler, from Byzantine to Beaux Arts, sponsored by N.Y.C. Cultural Walking Tours. For more information, call 979-2388. . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 6: Chinatown's history and food, sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. For more information, call 265-2663.

JAZZ/POP/ROCK

Spin Doctors—This hard-rocking outfit represents the unfashionably sincere wing of the neo-hippie movement in pop music. But if you close your eyes, they're a lot cooler than you think they are, even if they don't come from Seattle. Their funk-rock is tough-minded and lyrical, and their Aquarian trappings are not retro—these guys are true believers. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Dec. 29-31 at 8.)

Blues Traveler—Here's an expansive quartet of local boys who have graduated from the Wetlands club and may soon escape being pegged as a junior edition of the Grateful Dead. If you'd like an opportunity for a year-end dance marathon with a sweaty, tie-dyed horde, this Dionysian concert is your best bet. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Dec. 31 at 9.)

Michael Bolton—If any moment of the year could give the non-stop climactic monotony of Bolton's industrial-strength soul stylings an appropriate intensity, it would be the last ten seconds before midnight on New Year's Eve. But there's the rest of the concert to get through. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Dec. 31 at 9.)

Big Audio Dynamite II—Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 249-8870. Dec. 31 at 9.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 48.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (directed by Mike Newell), with Miranda Richardson.
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 24: "In the Soup" (Alexandre Rockwell). From Dec. 25: "Peter's Friends" (Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh, Emma Thompson, Rita Rudner, and Stephen Fry.
Theatre 4: "My New Gun" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara), with Harvey Keitel.

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Dec. 29: "Night and Day" (Chantal Akerman, in French).
From Dec. 30: "Il Portaborse" (1991, Daniele Luchetti; in Italian), with Silvio Orlando, Giulio Brogi, Anne Roussel, Angela Finocchiaro, and Nanni Moretti.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 3: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 4: "A River Runs Through It" (†).
Theatre 5: "Damage" (Louis Malle), with Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson, and Rupert Graves.
Theatre 6: "Forever Young" (†).
Theatre 7: "A Few Good Men" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).
Theatre 4: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 5: "Howards End" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Distinguished Gentleman."
Theatre 7: "Close to Eden" (Nikita Mikhalkov, in Russian).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 3: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
Theatre 4: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Dec. 24: Theatre closed. From Dec. 25: "Chaplin" (†).
Theatre 6: "Aladdin" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
To be annouonced.

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: To be annouonced.
Theatre 3: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 24: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes. From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"A Few Good Men" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Dec. 31: "Under Siege" (Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal.
From Jan. 1: Theatre closed.

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson); and (evenings only) "The Distinguished Gentleman."

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
Through Dec. 24: "The Last of the Mohicans" (Michael Mann), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
From Dec. 25: "Hoffa" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino), with Harvey Keitel.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks).
Theatre 2: "Husbands and Wives" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Dec. 24: "Jennifer Eight" (Bruce Robinson), with Andy Garcia. From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Used People" (Beeban Kidron), with Shirley MacLaine, Kathy Bates, Jessica Tandy, and Marcello Mastroianni.
Theatre 2: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 2: "Damage" (Louis Malle), with Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson, and Rupert Graves.
Theatre 3: "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara), with Harvey Keitel.

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 2: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 29: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†). From Dec. 30: "Lorenzo's Oil" (George Miller), with Nick Nolte, Susan Sarandon, and Peter Ustinov.
Theatre 4: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 5: "Singles" (†).
Theatre 6: "Consenting Adults" (Alan J. Pakula), with Kevin Kline.

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 24: "Malcolm X" (†). From Dec. 25: "Chaplin" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"A Few Good Men" (†).

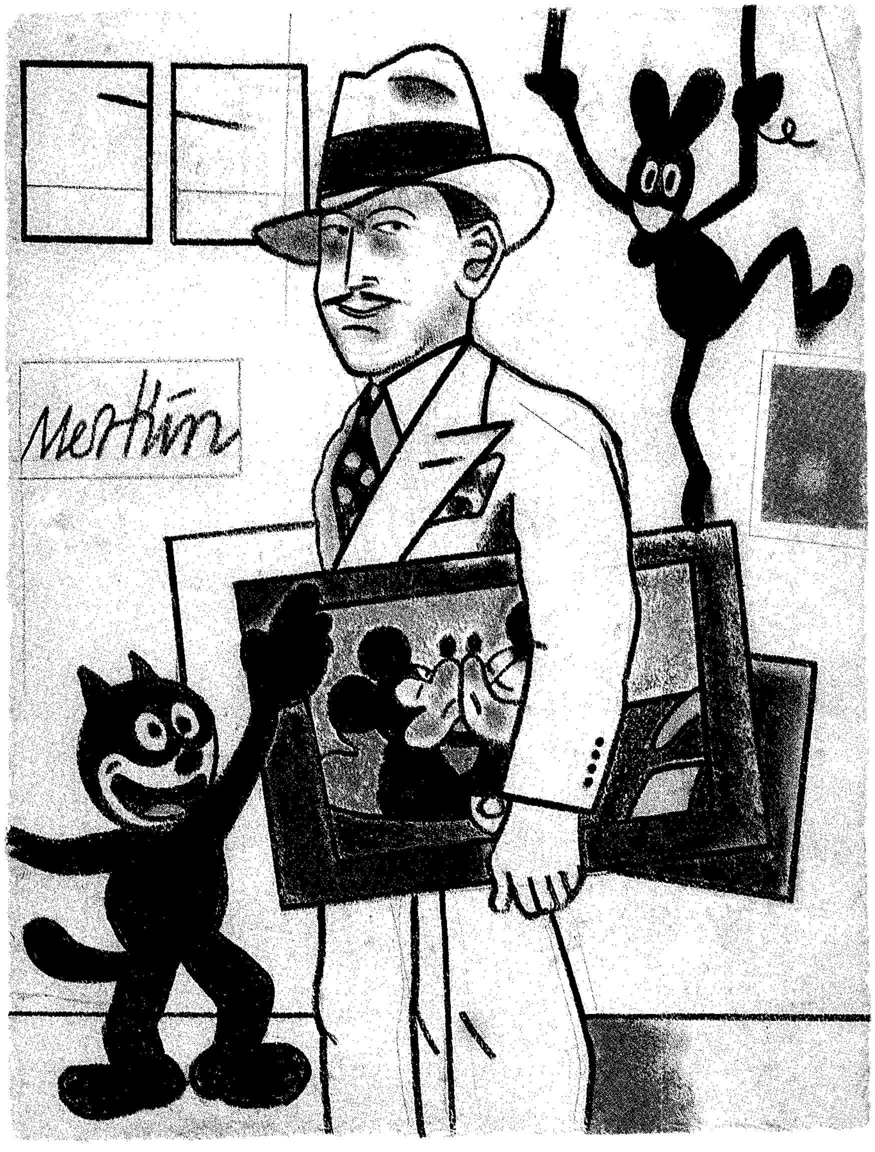
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 2: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Passion Fish" (John Sayles), with Mary McDonnell and Alfre Woodard.

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Forever Young" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 2: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.



Walt Disney's Silent Cartoons at the American Museum of the Moving Image

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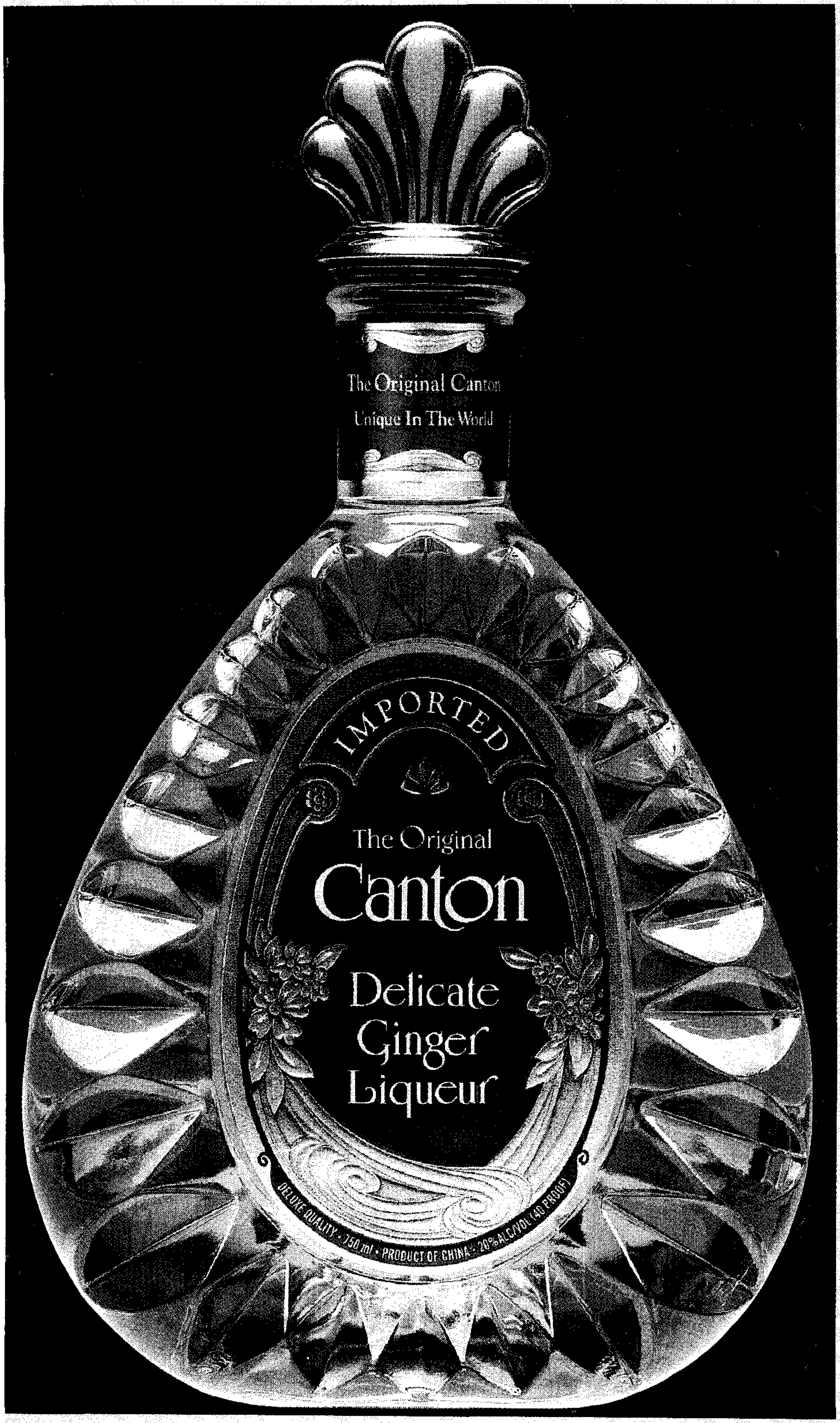
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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).
Theatre 5: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).
Theatre 6: "Forever Young" (†).
Theatre 7: "A Few Good Men" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Aladdin" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 29: A program of five short films. From Dec. 30: "Roy Rogers: King of the Cowboys" (Thys Ockersen), a documentary; and "The Golden Stallion" (1949, William Witney), with Rogers.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Daddy and the Muscle Academy" (directed by Ilppo Pohjola, in English and Finnish) and "Time Expired" (Danny Leiner).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Last of the Mohicans" (Michael Mann), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 2: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 24: "Singles" (†). From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 2: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 24: "Incident at Oglala" (Michael Apted), a documentary. From Dec. 25: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French), with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Gérard Depardieu, Anne Brochet, and Guillaume Depardieu.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 24: "Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino), with Harvey Keitel. From Dec. 25: "Tous les Matins du Monde."
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 24: (Separate admissions) "Husbands and Wives" (†); and "Becoming Colette" (Danny Huston). From Dec. 25: "Intervista" (Federico Fellini, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 24: "Johnny Stecchino" (Roberto Benigni, in Italian), with Benigni. From Dec. 25: "The Match Factory Girl" (Aki Kaurismaki).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Dec. 24: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†). From Dec. 25: "Hoffa" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 5: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 6: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.
Theatre 7: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 8: "Forever Young" (†).
Theatre 9: "Forever Young" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 24: "Malcolm X" (†). From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Aladdin" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "Becoming Colette" (Danny Huston).
Theatre 3: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 4: "Husbands and Wives" (†).
Theatre 5: "Glengarry Glen Ross" (†).
Theatre 6: "A River Runs Through It" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Dec. 24: "Mr. Saturday Night" (Billy Crystal).
From Dec. 25: "Hoffa" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Damage" (Louis Malle), with Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Miranda Richardson, and Rupert Graves.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 24: "Flirting" (John Duigan). From Dec. 25: "Peter's Friends" (Kenneth Branagh), with Branagh, Emma Thompson, Rita Rudner, and Stephen Fry.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 24: "Enchanted April" (Mike Newell), with Miranda Richardson. From Dec. 25: "Peter's Friends."

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Howards End" (†).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Forever Young" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French), with Jean-Pierre Marielle, Gérard Depardieu, Anne Brochet, and Guillaume Depardieu.
Theatre 2: Dec. 23: "The Match Factory Girl" (Aki Kaurismaki). From Dec. 24: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 3: "Waterland" (†).
Theatre 4: "Intervista" (Federico Fellini, in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: Dec. 23: "The Crying Game" (†). From Dec. 24: "Indochine."

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 24: "The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy. From Dec. 25: "Chaplin" (†).
Theatre 3: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 5: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 6: "A Few Good Men" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Howards End" (†).
Theatre 2: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).
Theatre 2: Through Dec. 24: "Passenger 57" (directed by Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes. From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through Dec. 24: "Under Siege" (directed by Andrew Davis), with Steven Seagal. From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 2: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Dec. 24: "Passenger 57" (Kevin Hooks), with Wesley Snipes. From Dec. 25: "Trespass" (†).
Theatre 5: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 7: "Toys" (Barry Levinson), with Robin Williams.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Distinguished Gentleman" (Jonathan Lynn), with Eddie Murphy.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Muppet Christmas Carol" (Brian Henson).
Theatre 2: "Bad Lieutenant" (Abel Ferrara), with Harvey Keitel.
Theatre 3: "Bram Stoker's Dracula" (†).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Leap of Faith" (Richard Pearce), with Steve Martin.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Dec. 26: "A Carol for Another Christmas" (1964, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz), with

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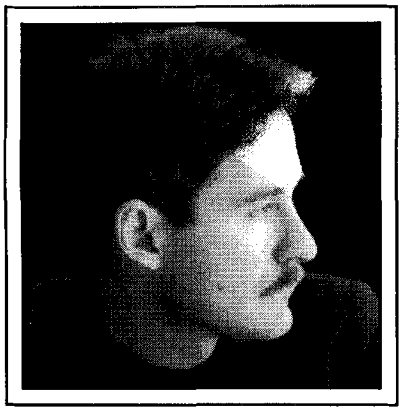
Kevin Kline



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SOME OF THIS SEASON'S HIGHLIGHTS

Strangers in Good Company
A funny and fascinating chronicle of seven elderly women and their discoveries in an abandoned house.

Straight Out of Brooklyn
This look at a black family's battle against the odds launched the career of 19-year-old filmmaker Matty Rich.

Good Morning, Babylon
Two immigrant brothers discover America on the set of a D.W. Griffith epic. Greta Scacchi and Vincent Spano star.

Fires in the Mirror
Racial conflicts in a Brooklyn neighborhood simmer and explode in Anna Deavere Smith's tour de force portrayal of over 30 characters.

Thank You & Goodnight!
Humor, heartache, drama and documentary merge in this offbeat look at the life and death of the filmmaker's grandmother.

La Carpa
An immigrant laborer finds justice, hope and heart in the spirited art of a traveling theater troupe in the '30s.

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Sterling Hayden; and "The Philadelphia Story" (1940, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart, Cary Grant, and Ruth Hussey.
Dec. 27-Jan. 2: "An American in Paris" (1951, Vincente Minnelli), with Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, and Oscar Levant.
From Jan. 3: "Wise Blood" (1979, John Huston), with Brad Dourif; and "The Dead" (see page 48).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Dec. 23: "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, and Glenda Jackson; and "Sons and Lovers" (1960, Jack Cardiff), with Trevor Howard, Dean Stockwell, and Wendy Hiller.
Dec. 24: Theatre closed.
Dec. 25-26: "It Happened One Night" (1934, Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable; and "Twentieth Century" (1934, Howard Hawks), with John Barrymore, Carole Lombard, and Ralph Forbes.
Dec. 27: "Interiors" (1978, Woody Allen), with Diane Keaton; and "Love and Death" (1975, Allen), with Allen and Keaton.
Dec. 28: "The Exterminating Angel" (1962, Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "That Obscure Object of Desire" (1977, Buñuel; in French), with Fernando Rey, Carole Bouquet, and Angela Molina.
Dec. 29: "Agatha" (1979, Michael Apted), with Dustin Hoffman and Vanessa Redgrave; and "Papillon" (†).
Dec. 30: "The Last Detail" (1974, Hal Ashby), with Jack Nicholson, Otis Young, and Randy Quaid; and "Carnal Knowledge" (1971, Mike Nichols), with Nicholson, Candice Bergen, Arthur Garfunkel, and Ann-Margret.
Dec. 31-Jan. 1: "The Lady Eve" (1941, Preston Sturges), with Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, and Charles Coburn; and "Sullivan's Travels" (1941, Sturges), with Veronica Lake and Joel McCrea.
Jan. 2: "The Philadelphia Story" (1940, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart, Cary Grant, and Ruth Hussey; and "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, Howard Hawks), with Hepburn, Grant, and Charles Ruggles.
Jan. 3: "Dracula" (†) and "Mark of the Vampire" (†).
Jan. 4: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina; and "Il Bidone" ("The Swindlers"; 1955, Fellini; in Italian), with Broderick Crawford, Masina, and Richard Basehart.
Jan. 5: "Blonde Venus" (1932, Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich, Herbert Marshall, and Cary Grant; and "Shanghai Express" (1932, von Sternberg), with Dietrich, Clive Brook, and Warner Oland.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Dec. 24 at 2:30 and Dec. 26 at 5: "Mad Genius" (1931, directed by Michael Curtiz), with Lionel Barrymore. . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 3: "My Daughter Is Mine" (1992, Vivian Naefe; in German and Greek). . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 2 and Dec. 28 at 6: "Kid Galahad" (1937, Curtiz), with Bette Davis, Edward G. Robinson, and Wayne Morris. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 2:30 and Dec. 28 at 6: "Wildfire" (1990, Jo Baier; in German). . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 5, Dec. 28 at 3, and Dec. 31 at 3: "Silent Shadows" (1991, Sherry Hormann; in German). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 2 and Dec. 29 at 6: "Four Daughters" (†). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 2:30 and Dec. 29 at 6: "Hotel Deutschland" (1991, Stefan Paul). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 5 and Dec. 29 at 2:30: "Four Wives" (1939, Curtiz), with Claude Rains, Jeffrey Lynn, and Eddie Albert. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 5 and Dec. 29 at 3: "Apple Trees" (1992, Helma Sanders-Brahms; in German). . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 2:30 and Dec. 31 at noon: "Sea Wolf" (1941, Curtiz), with Robinson, Ida Lupino, and John Garfield. . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 2:30: "Casablanca" (1942, Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Rains, and Paul Henreid. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 2 and Jan. 3 at 5: "The Sea Hawk" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 2, Jan. 3

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at 5, and Jan. 4 at 3: "Schtonk!" (1991, Helmut Dietl; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 5 and Jan. 3 at 2: "Dodge City" (1939, Curtiz), with Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, and Ann Sheridan. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 5: "The Blue Hour" (1991, Marcel Gisler; in German). . . . ¶ Jan. 2 at 2 and Jan. 4 at 6: "Mildred Pierce" (1945, Curtiz), with Joan Crawford, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, and Ann Blyth. . . . ¶ Jan. 2 at 3 and Jan. 4 at 6: "Liberators Take Liberties" (1992, Helke Sander; in German), a three-hour documen-tary. . . . ¶ Jan. 2 at 5 and Jan. 4 at 2:30: "Angels with Dirty Faces" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 3 at 2:30: "The Terrible Threesome" (1991, Hermine Huntgeburth). . . . ¶ Jan. 5 at 2:30: "Yankee Doodle Dandy" (1942, Curtiz), with James Cagney. . . . ¶Jan. 5 at 3 and 6: "Montreal Sextet" (1991, Denys Arcand, Michel Brault, Atom Egoyan, Jacques Leduc, Léa Pool, and Patricia Rozema; in French). . . . ¶ Jan. 5 at 6: "Santa Fe Trail" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Dec. 23 at 2 and 7 and Dec. 24 at 4:30 and 9:30: "The Holy Office" (1973, Arturo Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish). . . . ¶ Dec. 23 at 4:30 and 9:30 and Dec. 24 at 2 and 7: "We Are Arab Jews in Israel" (1977, Yig'al Niddam; an Israeli film). . . . ¶ Dec. 26-27 at 2: "The Snow Queen" (1985, Päivi Hartzell). . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 3:45: "Pump up the Volume" (1990, Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 5:45: "Wedding in Blood" (1974, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Stéphane Audran and Michel Piccoli. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 7:30 and 9:45: "The House on Chelouche Street" (1973, Moshe Mizrahi; an Israeli film). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 4 and 8: "Scapegoat" (1991, Dan Wolman; an Israeli film). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 6:15 and Dec. 28 at 2 and 6:30: "Intimate Stranger" (1991, Alan Berliner). . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 4:15 and 9:15 and Dec. 29 at 2 and 6:30: "The Last Marranos" (1990, Frederic Brenner and Stan Neumann; in French). . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 4:15 and 8:45 and Dec. 30 at 2: "Light Out of Nowhere" (1973, Nissim Dayan; an Israeli film). . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Return to Oujda" (1987, Charlotte Szlovak; in French) and "Pillar of Salt" (1979, Haim Shiran; an Israeli film). . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 6:30 and Dec. 31 at 2 and 6: "Falasha: Exile of the Black Jews" (1984, Simcha Jacobovici). . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 3:45 and 7:30: "I Love You, Rosa" (1972, Moshe Mizrahi; an Israeli film). . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 7: "Spies" (1928, Fritz Lang). . . . ¶ Jan. 2-3 at 4 and 8 and Jan. 4 at 2: "Doktor Mabuse" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 4 at 6 and 8:15 and Jan. 5 at 4 and 8:15: "The Testament of Dr. Mabuse" (†). . . . ¶ Jan. 5 at 2 and 6:15: "The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse" (1960, Fritz Lang).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Dec. 26-27 at 3 and 5, Dec. 28-31 at 2, and Jan. 2-3 at 2 and 4: Six different programs of early silent cartoons by Walt Disney.

MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Donal McCann and Anjelica Huston in "The Dead"

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The Angel Gabriel

JOHN HUSTON'S "The Dead" (playing January 3-7, at Film Forum 2) leaves you with something rare in movies: a fullness of emotion. The director's 1987 valedictory, scripted by his son Tony from James Joyce's short story, is a sublime work of art that also, at a mere eighty-three minutes, offers a complete evening's entertainment. Without any fuss, Huston ushers us into Misses Kate and Julia Morkan's celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany in Dublin, 1904. For the delight of such guests as the Morkans' college-teaching nephew, Gabriel (Donal McCann), and his wife, Gretta (Anjelica Huston), a college dean reads Lady Gregory's translation of a Gaelic poem, Julia gamely trills through a song from Bellini, the Morkans' niece plays the piano, and the renowned tenor Bartell D'Arcy (Frank Patterson) croons a poignant ballad, "The Lass of Aughrim." When Gabriel sees Gretta struck motionless by D'Arcy's singing, it's one of the great moments in movie history. The scene is hushed, suspended in time. Yet it's fraught with feeling—of Gabriel for his wife and of Gretta for a boy who once loved her. In the end, the cozy claustrophobia of the Morkans' party and the simmering anguish of Gabriel—who must face his emotional limitations and his hollow cultural pretensions—come together with absolute inevitability. You may find your eyes filling with tears when Gabriel declares, "Better pass boldly into that other world, in the glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age." But they won't be simple tears of mourning. They'll be the ambiguous "generous tears" that Joyce says fill Gabriel's eyes, too: the tears that accompany epiphany.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

ALADDIN—Spiffy, inventive, and hilarious. The directors, John Musker and Ron Clements, who collaborated on the screenplay with Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, streamline the traditional Aladdin story into a contest between the boy and a towering vizier-wizard named Jafar, Aladdin's rival for the hand of the Sultan's daughter, Princess Jasmine. What makes this wisecracking cartoon such intense, giddy fun is the eruption of uninhibited parody that Robin Williams provides as the voice of the Genie in Aladdin's lamp. The Genie mutates into dozens of variations on himself as Williams impersonates everyone from William F. Buckley, Jr., to Arsenio Hall. The animators' quick-draw craftsmanship keeps up with Williams' breakaway creativity. With the voices of Scott Weinger, Linda Larkin, Jonathan Freeman, and Gilbert Gottfried (who unexpectedly triumphs as Jafar's tough parrot, Iago); composer Alan Menken contributes five songs, with lyrics by Tim Rice and the late Howard Ashman.—M.S. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/30/92.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES (1938)—An entertaining picture lurks behind that uninviting title. Warners threw its assets together in this one: James Cagney at his cockiest as a gangster, Pat O'Brien as a priest, and Humphrey Bogart, Ann Sheridan, George Bancroft, and the Dead End Kids, too. It has jokes and romance and a smashing big last sequence on Death Row—the priest asks the gangster to act cowardly when he's executed, so that he won't be a hero to the Dead End Kids, and Cagney comes through with a rousing finale. Michael Curtiz directed; John Wexley and Warren Duff wrote the screenplay, based on Rowland Brown's story. (It was followed the next year by "The Angels Wash Their Faces.")—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 2 and 4.)

THE BODYGUARD—According to the screenwriter (and co-producer), Lawrence Kasdan, the script for this picture was written in 1975 as a possible vehicle for Steve McQueen. In lieu of McQueen, Kevin Costner plays the title character, a retired Secret Service man who is hired to protect a famous singer (played by Whitney Houston). Costner sports a fuzzy crewcut that's more travesty than homage, and he's very grim; he looks as if he were still troubled by inconsistencies in the Warren Commission report. Houston, in a variety of glitzy costumes, belts a few forgettable songs for the soundtrack album and flings herself repeatedly at the taciturn hero,

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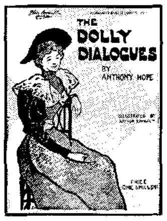

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

begging him for both sex and manly state-of-the-art security. The movie, directed by Mick Jackson, is a formulaic and ruinously long thriller that might have been more fun if its absurdities had been played as high camp. (The climax is an assassination attempt at the Oscar ceremony.) It is, perhaps, a sign of progress that a big-budget commercial picture like this can feature a romance between a white man and a black woman without ever making the racial difference an issue. It would be a more encouraging sign if the movie were any good. Also with Michele Lamar Richards and Gary Kemp.—T.R. (12/14/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA—The filmmakers can't put this fiasco off on poor Stoker. What makes the picture so peerlessly ridiculous is the style, not the story. The screenplay, by James V. Hart, embellishes a simple, classic tale with killer-diller thrills and special-effects opportunities; and the director, Francis Ford Coppola, executes every dreadful idea with ferocious, near-fanatical enthusiasm. The movie is conceived as a vampire saga in the modern, eroticized manner—horror to make women swoon like Victorian maidens—but it isn't very scary, and it isn't romantic. Gary Oldman, who plays Dracula, is perfectly opaque and remote in the seduction scenes: he has no sex appeal. The picture just keeps coming at us indefatigably, unstoppably, as if it were pursuing us through eternity, and it leaves us feeling mysteriously drained. This is no ordinary movie: it has the appalling persistence of the undead. Also with Anthony Hopkins, Winona Ryder, Keanu Reeves, and Tom Waits.—T.R. (11/30/92) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Bay Cinema, Orpheum VII, Festival, 62nd & Broadyway, and Embassy.)

CHAPLIN—With Robert Downey, Jr., directed by Richard Attenborough. (Reviewed in this issue.) (19th Street East 6, Gemini, and 84th Street Sixplex; starting Dec. 25.)

THE CRYING GAME—This amazing new movie by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan ("Mona Lisa," "The Miracle") has the sure grip and the unstoppable momentum of a dream. Jordan tells the story of Fergus (Stephen Rea), a troubled I.R.A. gunman who undergoes a thorough emotional metamorphosis, and he makes the hero's change of heart moving and persuasive; the film inspires an irrational sort of trust, a willing suspension of something deeper and more fundamental than disbelief. The script is full of reversals and abrupt dislocations and, halfway through, the movie springs a huge, jaw-dropping surprise. Disorienting us isn't the ultimate aim of Jordan's artistic strategy, though; he jars us out of our accustomed responses to prepare us for the purer, more penetrating ones he really wants from us. The picture is a splendid entertainment—an elating, charmed sprint through all sorts of contemporary terrors. Also with Forest Whitaker, Miranda Richardson, Jim Broadbent, Adrian Dunbar, and a newcomer named Jaye Davidson, who is astonishing.—T.R. (11/16/92) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

DOKTOR MABUSE (1922)—Fritz Lang's first film about Mabuse, the hypnotic genius-criminal who masterminds a secret organization of cutthroats and counterfeiters. Rudolf Klein-Rogge plays the demonic doctor, who dominates everyone around him and means to run the world. In Part I, he gambles, causes stock to decline, and hypnotizes a young millionaire. In Part II, he hypnotizes the public prosecutor who is investigating him, but the police save the prosecutor, and Mabuse winds up in a madhouse. Not altogether coherent, but full of sensational material and suggestions of decadence, the film, which runs four and a half hours, was condensed to a generally incoherent ninety minutes when it was first released in the U.S. The version showing here is over three hours.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; Jan. 2-4.)

DRACULA (1931)—It begins well, wandering around the crypt of Dracula's castle in the Carpathian Mountains as the vampires get up from their coffins. But this first American version, directed by Tod Browning, was adapted from a play based on the Bram Stoker novel, rather than from the novel itself, and it becomes too stagy. It was a tremendous popular success, however (it was advertised as "The Strangest Love Story of All"), and spawned many sequels. As Count Dracula, Bela Lugosi is the courtly personification of evil. He had played the role on Broadway in 1927 and had toured in it for years, and he seemed inside it in a wonderfully hammy, slightly demented way; his stilted manner and his ripe Hungarian accent have been imitated and parodied by subsequent Draculas. With pale Helen Chandler, who seems too anemic to attract a vampire, David Manners, Frances Dade, Edward Van Sloan, and the peerlessly degraded Dwight Frye, always looking for insects to munch on. Cinematography by Karl Freund; script by Garrett Fort, with dialogue by Dudley Murphy; play by Hamilton Deane and John L. Balderston.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 3.)

A FEW GOOD MEN—Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson square off in this yuppie version of "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial," with Cruise as a glib, Harvard-trained Navy lawyer defending two Marines accused of murder, and Nicholson as the Captain Queeg-like officer who set the crime in motion. The writer, Aaron Sorkin (who adapted his own hit play), and the director, Rob Reiner, seem to think the story has something to say about legal and military honor. They take issues that have been chewed over for centuries and finally succeed in reducing them to cud. The whole film, with its steady, important-picture pacing, its foursquare visual style, and its pseudo-profundity, is a piece of glorified banality. Nicholson boasts a couple of bravura scenes but Kevin Bacon gives the most persuasive performance, as the no-nonsense prosecutor. With Demi Moore, Kevin Pollak, Kiefer Sutherland, J. T. Walsh, and Wolfgang Bodison.—M.S. (12/14/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin.)

FOREVER YOUNG—A retro romance in the insufferably gloppy manner of Steven Spielberg's "Always" (which had many of us hoping "Never"). Mel Gibson stars as a daredevil Air Corps pilot in 1939 who volunteers for a cryogenics experiment after his true love (Isabel Glasser) enters a seemingly irreversible coma. By a twist of fate, he stays frozen for over fifty years, emerging with enough of his Dudley Do-Right manliness intact to impress single mom Jamie Lee Curtis, her young son, Elijah Wood, and even her dull suitor, Nicholas Surovy. The screenwriter, Jeffrey Abrams, has a mind that channel-hops from AMC to Nick at Nite: he stuffs the film with old-movie gimmicks and sitcom devices, such as Gibson's being able to propose marriage only when his lover is absent. The director, Steve Miner, matches the writer drip for drip. Gibson isn't smarmy, exactly, but the film makes him appear that way; it's like the joke in "L.A. Story" picturing him as the man of everybody's dreams, male or female. And after Glasser's back-to-back appearances here and in "Pure Country," it's impossible to tell whether she has any talent beyond appearing prettily wholesome. At this point, she's a cornball commodity: a free-range actress. With George Wendt and David Marshall Grant.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

FOUR DAUGHTERS (1938)—This picture was hugely popular, and you can still feel why. It sets up a happy small-town family—a widowed Doctor of Music (Claude Rains) and his four musical daughters (Priscilla, Rosemary, and Lola Lane and Gale Page) whose interplay gives off some sparks. All four of the girls are dazzled by a handsome, confident young composer (Jeffrey Lynn), but he brings in a piano player he has hired to do the orchestration on his new composition, and this big-

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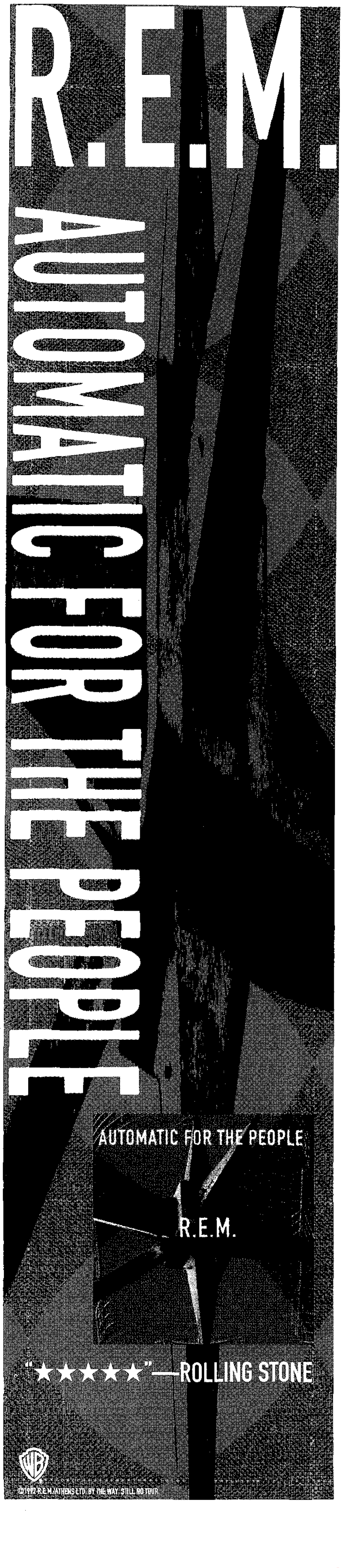
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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

city musician—a cynical loser who claims that the fates have always been against him—disrupts the apparent harmony of the all-American household. This loser was the first important film role for John Garfield, and he's more original and surprising than he ever was to be again. It's as if an Odets Depression hero—ethnic and resentful, with a quizzical eyebrow and a hefty chip on his shoulder, had stormed into the Waspy decorum of the 1933 "Little Women." Garfield's negativism energizes the movie: you see the birth of a new kind of star. (Later, his loser number got stylized; here it has a fresh feeling to it.) Directed by Michael Curtiz, from a lively script, by Julius Epstein and Lenore Coffee, that's based on Fannie Hurst's novel "Sister Act," the movie is very shrewdly conceived, even though Rains is allowed to mug and there's a lot of over-obvious acting. Fannie Hurst's sentimental realism—it has a heartless, practical side—is something you can't fight off. (There's a good piece of editing when one of the sisters announces her engagement to the composer, and the other girls' suddenly stricken expressions give way to their announcements of plans.) With May Robson, Frank McHugh, and Dick Foran. (Remade, in 1955, as "Young at Heart," with Frank Sinatra in the Garfield role.)—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Dec. 27 and 29.)

Glengarry Glen Ross—David Mamet's 1984 Pulitzer Prize winner—about real-estate salesmen who put the screws on hapless marks in order to keep their own ugly jobs—made ripping theatre, whatever else it was or wasn't. But the movie, set in the lean Bush years, spells out the characters' despair in cue cards, right from the start, and hammers away at the plot so relentlessly that you can feel the nails entering the back of your skull. Still, the performers provide relief. Ed Harris and Alan Arkin, as the sleek yet panicky Moss and the sad-sack Aaronow, turn their "Are we speaking or are we talking?" duet into an existential Abbott-and-Costello number. Al Pacino, as Roma, Mamet's Mr. Slick, is amusingly lordly: he's simultaneously high-handed and under-handed. And Kevin Spacey, as their steely office manager, Williamson, plants a daringly long fuse and ignites it with the smallest flicker. Only Jack Lemmon, as Shelley (the Machine) Levene, disappoints: he starts strong, but the director, James Foley, lets him drown in unearned emotion, as if this were Lemmon's shot at "Death of a Salesman." Mamet did his own adaptation, adding another ruthless person to the melodrama: a head-office hit man played by Alec Baldwin.—M.S. (10/5/92) (Village East Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Hoffa—With Jack Nicholson and Danny DeVito, directed by DeVito. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld; starting Dec. 25.)

Home Alone 2: Lost in New York—The director, Chris Columbus, and the producer-writer, John Hughes, use the first "Home Alone" as a template. Leaning hard on the sensitive-brat charm of the eleven-year-old Macaulay Culkin, they duplicate and exaggerate every laugh-getting, tearjerking separation and reunion, every crowd-pleasing gibe and gambit. This time, young Kevin McCallister mistakenly boards a plane to Gotham while his folks fly off to Miami for their Christmas vacation. The filmmakers pump up the volume on the schmalz and sadism, hoping to attain a hyperbolic balance. What they achieve is double overkill. Culkin is directed as if he were an animatronic doll. He screams, he pouts, he proclaims "Yes!" Either you're captivated or you want to muzzle him. The new characters include Brenda Fricker as a homeless woman who devotes herself to pigeons, and Tim Curry, Dana Ivey, and Rob Schneider as nincompoop hotel workers. The repeat performers include Catherine O'Hara and John Heard (as Kevin's parents), and Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern (as Kevin's slapstick nemeses).—M.S. (11/30/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Howards End—James Ivory's movie version of the 1910 E. M. Forster novel is a handsome and intelligent piece of work: a faithful, well-paced, and carefully crafted dramatization of a very good story. The heroine, Margaret Schlegel (Emma Thompson), is a thirtyish Englishwoman of German ancestry who lives with her sister and her brother in a London town house. The emotional core of the movie is the brief, unlikely friendship that develops between Margaret and conservative Ruth Wilcox (Vanessa Redgrave), a woman who inhabits a narrow world so profoundly, and with such enormous feeling, that she transforms it. Redgrave is at her most radiant in this role. And Thompson, whose character is meant to be seen as the heir to Mrs. Wilcox's thoroughly English kind of spirituality, comes through with a thrilling, original performance; she carries the movie. (Anthony Hopkins, as the no-nonsense businessman Henry Wilcox, is awfully good, too.) All that's missing, really, is the elusive quality that makes Forster such a brave, moving writer: his constant striving to see beyond the story, to see through it, to transcend it. Adaptation by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala.—T.R. (5/4/92) (Village East Cinemas, Cinema 3, and Metro Cinema.)

Husbands and Wives—Woody Allen's uncomfortably personal new movie renders the dissolution of a marriage in a style that's meant to look raw, rough-edged, truthful. He uses jump-cutting and wobbly hand-held camerawork to create the illusion of immediacy, of lifelike spontaneity and muddle. But the movie's vision of life isn't really very persuasive, and Allen isn't saying anything that he hasn't said before. The cinéma-vérité surface feels like a con, a razzle-dazzle cover for imaginative exhaustion. Except for Judy Davis's ebullient performance as a friend of the central couple, Gabe and Judy Roth (Allen and Mia Farrow), the movie's humor is surprisingly flat. Allen's bemused vision of romantic folly has turned, over the years, into a bilious take-my-wife-please routine. The most disturbing, and angering, thing about the picture is that Allen has transformed his disappointment in himself into disgust for other people: he's going down, and he's determined to take the rest of us with him. Also with Liam Neeson, Juliette Lewis, Sydney Pollack, Lysette Anthony, and Benno Schmidt.—T.R. (9/21/92) (Manhattan Twin, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through Dec. 24.)

The Lover—Jean-Jacques Annaud's version of Marguerite Duras's autobiographical novel, about her sexual coming of age in 1929 Saigon, is a singularly empty moviegoing experience. Annaud simply illustrates the love story of the Young Girl (Jane March) and the Chinese Man (Tony Leung), and uses Duras's narration (spoken by Jeanne Moreau) whenever he's absolutely pressed to articulate what's happening. As the Man proclaims his love and the Girl tries out her budding wiles on him, the film becomes a game of "She loves me, she loves me not." Although the stars expose their bodies with aplomb, Annaud stages their grappling so self-consciously that you tire of their flesh. Screenplay by Annaud and Gerard Brach.—M.S. (11/16/92) (Fine Arts.)

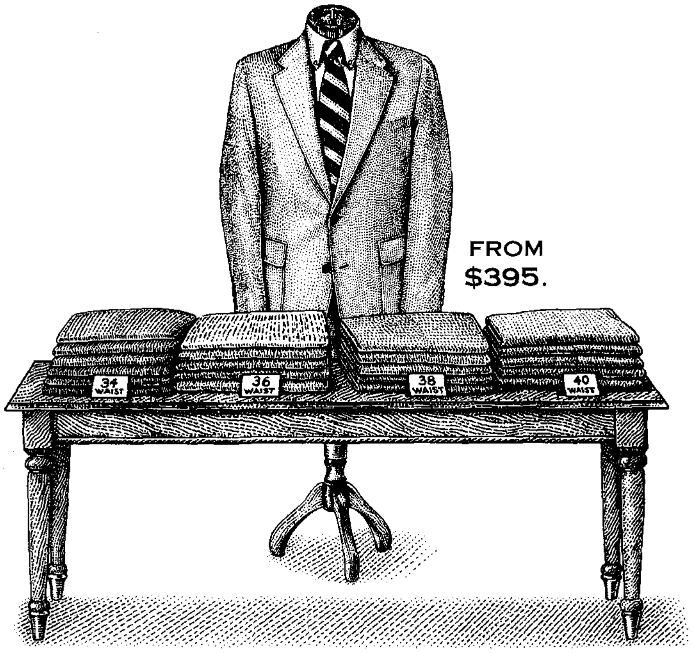
Malcolm X—There's a great deal of passion in Spike Lee's three-hour-and-twenty-minute adaptation of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," but it's not an artist's passion. Malcolm, who achieved fame in the early sixties as a compelling spokesman for the black-pride philosophy of the Nation of Islam, is an unlikely hero for a big-studio prestige picture: he begins as a predatory street criminal, becomes a studious Muslim ascetic, and fulfills himself as a scourge. The movie doesn't provide readers of the autobiography anything like a fresh vision of its remarkable subject. The ponderous rhythms of the great-man bio-pic only emphasize the impossibility of rendering this story with conventional movie-narrative means. Denzel Washington's performance as Malcolm gets off to a rocky start—for the first hour, he's required to play the hero as a teen-ager—but it gains authority as the movie goes along. This film's Malcolm isn't so much a character as an image: a statue for us to look up at in wonder. Also with Angela Bassett, Delroy Lindo, Albert Hall, Spike Lee, and Al Freeman, Jr. (a wonderfully sly turn as the hero's mentor, Elijah Muhammad). The script, credited to Lee and Arnold Perl, incorporates (haphazardly) scenes and ideas from a scenario written more than twenty years ago by James Baldwin.—T.R. (11/30/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Mark of the Vampire (1935)—This is a failed effort of Tod Browning's, though it's handsomely staged and well photographed (by James Wong Howe). The cast includes Carol Borland as an amusing female vampire who flies on huge bat wings, Lionel Barrymore, Bela Lugosi, Lionel Atwill, and Elizabeth Allan. (It's a remake of Browning's 1927 "London After Midnight," with Lon Chaney.)—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 3.)

My New Gun—The heroine of Stacy Cochran's movie is a young New Jersey housewife named Debbie Bender (Diane Lane), whose husband buys her a revolver she doesn't want. This husband, Gerald (Stephen Collins), is a smug radiologist who dominates his wife completely: when he announces that the Bender household—a condo overlooking a golf course—needs a firearm, that's it. The gun itself is a little more than a pretext and a lot less than a symbol: it serves mostly to get her involved in the mysterious life of her across-the-street neighbor, Skippy (James LeGros), a scruffy, shifty-eyed young man who has a big crush on her. LeGros is wonderfully sly and seductive, and Diane Lane's delicately funny performance conveys the movie's exploratory sensibility with thrilling clarity: she makes us feel the risky joy of venturing beyond your own narrow plot and becoming a part of someone else's story. Cochran—a recent film-school graduate—gives the dull suburban setting a surprising richness and beauty.—T.R. (11/2/92) (Angelika Film Center.)

Papillon (1973)—A methodical, pointlessly gruelling movie in which Steve McQueen keeps trying to escape from Devil's Island and fellow-convict Dustin Hoffman keeps financing his attempts. There isn't a laugh in its two and a half hours. The moviemakers have approached the subject of Papillon (a French safecracker who was sentenced to prison for life for killing a pimp and who, thirty-odd years after he broke out, trumped up his adventures into a best-seller) as if they were making an important historical biography—about a pope, at the very least. The material has been treated not as if it were an escape story but as if it were *the* escape story. This is a movie Mt. Rushmore, though it features only two heads. If ever there was a wrong actor for a man of great spirit, it's McQueen; as Robert Mitchum once remarked, "Steve doesn't bring too much to the party." He seems to inspire Hoffman to underplay, too. Theirs is the only emotional bond in the movie, and there's hardly any emotion in it. Directed by the immaculately literal-minded Franklin Schaffner; the script, by Dalton Trumbo and Lorenzo Semple, Jr., is based on the book by Henry Charrière. With Anthony Zerbe and George Coulouris.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 29.)

A River Runs Through It—Robert Redford's movie of Norman Maclean's lyrical novella about fly-fishing and family loyalty in Montana is serene, lulling, tranquil—no, it's dead dull. Maclean's story traces the history of its narrator's relationship with his self-destructive kid brother, Paul, through detailed descriptions of their fishing trips; the narrative is driven by the tension between what it's telling us and what it's leaving out. Disastrously, Redford and screenwriter Richard Frieden-



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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

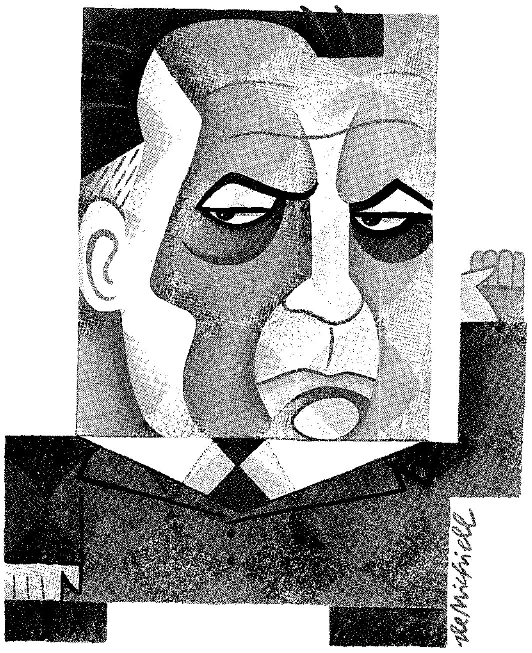
berg open up the story. They show us too much of what's happening offstage—that is, away from the river—and thus allow the real source of the story's emotions to dissipate. With a delicately balanced narrative like this one, more is inevitably less. Redford and Friedenberg try to catch the story's elusive meanings by lobbing grenades into the river and blowing everything in it out into the light of day. With Craig Sheffer as the narrator, Norman, and Brad Pitt (who looks like a young Redford and gives a lightweight performance) as Paul.—T.R. (10/19/92) (Village Theatre VII, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Santa Fe Trail (1940)—One of Hollywood's careless, shameless distortions of American history. The team of Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland had thrived under the direction of Michael Curtiz in such films as "Captain Blood," The Adventures of Robin Hood," and "Dodge City," and so this bloated Western was confected. Flynn plays a monolithically brave Jeb Stuart, and Ronald Reagan is young George Armstrong Custer; they're both after dainty Olivia. The offensive plot pits the two handsome young blades, fresh from West Point, against a rabid, fanatic John Brown (Raymond Massey, at his most burning-eyed hypertense, and photographed to inspire fear and revulsion in the audience). The black men whom Brown seeks to liberate appear to be childish dupes. It's a romantic, action-filled, screwed-up epic; you get the feeling that maybe nobody intended it to be as reactionary as it turned out, with Olivia looking especially fetching in front of the gallows where Brown is hanged. At the end, some good liberal appears to have had a fit of remorse; when the heroine goes on her wedding trip with Stuart, the sound of "John Brown's Body" rises above the rhythm of the moving train. The large cast includes Van Heflin (a dirty villain), Douglas Fowley, Gene Reynolds, Alan Hale, Alan Baxter, Susan Peters, and Ward Bond. The screenplay is by Robert Buckner; music by Max Steiner.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 5.)

Scent of a Woman—With Al Pacino and Chris O'Donnell, directed by Martin Brest. (Reviewed in this issue.) (First & 62nd Cinemas.)

The Sea Hawk (1940)—Errol Flynn, playing a hero based on Sir Francis Drake, in a rousing swashbuckler directed by Michael Curtiz. The Spaniards talk peculiar slang, considering that the year is 1585, but Flora Robson's Queen Elizabeth is a vigorous shrewdie. The cast includes Brenda Marshall, Claude Rains, Gilbert Roland, Henry Daniell, Alan Hale, Una O'Connor, Donald Crisp, and many other well-known performers. Seton I. Miller and Howard Koch were the writers; the music is by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Jan. 1 and 3.)

Singles—Cameron Crowe's second film as a writer-director (the first was the lovely 1989 teen comedy "Say Anything") is a buoyant, sweet-tempered little picture about the romantic confusions of some young Seattle apartment-dwellers. It's an ensemble piece, the sort of movie that flits from character to character like a hummingbird. This is romantic comedy of the wispiest kind, but the picture is generous, graceful, and consistently funny. Campbell Scott and Kyra Sedgwick play Steve and Linda, idealistic yuppies in love, and both prove to be wonderfully deft comedians. And Matt Dillon, as Cliff, the rather dim leader of a band called Citizen Dick, is hilarious. But the standout in Crowe's energetic cast is Bridget Fonda, who plays Janet, a bubbly underachiever inexplicably smitten with Cliff. Fonda is a true original: she brings such reckless, joyous abandon to Janet's pursuit of the unlikely object of desire that she transforms this desperate love story line into something exuberantly optimistic.—T.R. (First & 62nd Cinemas. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through Dec. 24.)



Jack Nicholson in "Hoffa"

The Testament of Dr. Mabuse (1933)—A Fritz Lang thriller, but not to be confused with his brilliant, spidery 1922 "Doktor Mabuse." This later film, in which the mad Mabuse (Rudolph Klein-Rogge), a criminal mastermind locked in an asylum, hypnotizes the head of the asylum into doing his will, was Lang's first anti-Nazi picture. Banned by Goebbels in March, 1933, it had a rough history. It opened in the United States in 1943, with a foreword by Lang: "This film was made to denounce the terrorist methods of Hitler. Slogans and doctrines of the Third Reich have been put into the mouths of criminals . . . " Would that the film was as audacious as that sounds; the visual style, however, seems more remarkable than the political content, and some people have suggested that those political intentions may have been augmented by hindsight. In German.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; starting Jan. 4.)

Trespass—With Bill Paxton, Ice T, William Sadler, and Ice Cube; directed by Walter Hill. (Reviewed in this issue.) (34th Street Showplace, 59th Street East, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and Criterion Center; starting Dec. 25.)

Waterland—Tom Crick (Jeremy Irons), the protagonist and narrator of Stephen Gyllenhaal's film, is a middle-aged history teacher immobilized by his own past. The 1983 novel, by Graham Swift, from which the picture has been adapted is a determinedly inward-looking work: unpromising material for a film. And this hero—a hopeless, defeated, rumpled-corduroy man, marking time as he slides inexorably toward decrepitude and merciful oblivion—isn't the sort that movie audiences tend to clasp to their bosoms. Yet the picture is, in its gray way, absorbing and often moving. The screenwriter, Peter Prince, has streamlined the novel's twisty narrative very intelligently. And the actors are awfully good. Grant Warnock and Lena Headey, the young performers who play Tom and his wife-to-be in flashback sequences, bring a convincing and touching adolescent gravity to their roles. Irons imparts a whiff of something like madness to his character's middle-aged desperation. His performance lifts the movie to the top of the rueful-retrospection class. Also with Sinead Cusack, David Morrissey, Ethan Hawke, and John Heard.—T.R. (11/2/92) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

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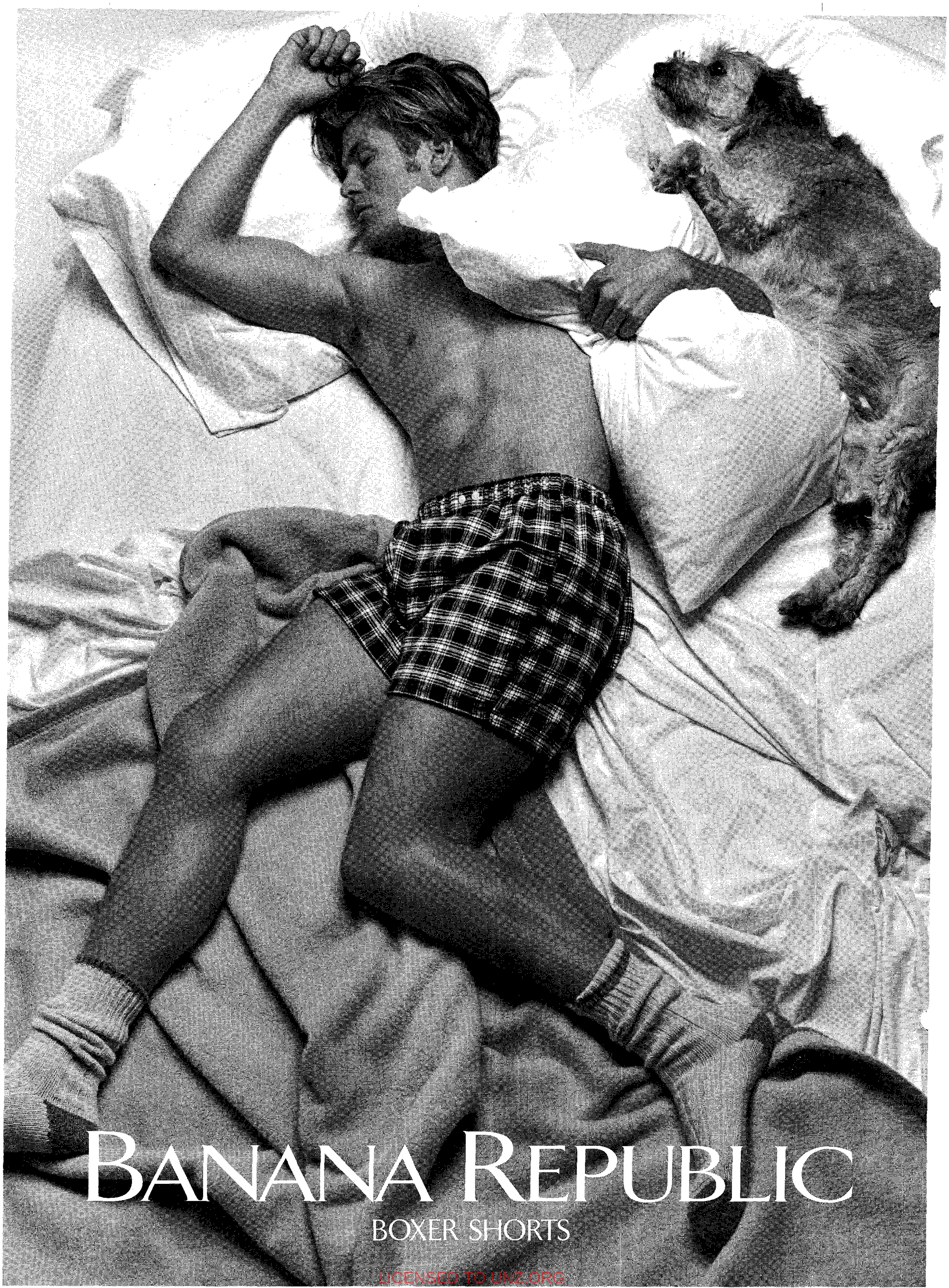
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

BEATING THE STORM

THE freak storm that swept across the city the other Friday coincided inconveniently with a gala evening arranged by the Brooklyn Academy of Music, with much high-powered sponsorship, to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its Next Wave Festival. The event was the American première of "The Hard Nut," the avant-garde choreographer Mark Morris' daringly modern version of "The Nutcracker." It was supposed to begin at seven o'clock, but when seven arrived nearly half the seats were still empty, though all of them had been sold. Limousines carrying the sponsors and their friends, which had set out from Manhattan at least an hour earlier, were still crawling miserably through the wet toward the Brooklyn Bridge. When the curtain finally went up it was after seven-thirty, and the theatre was still only partly filled. Some dishearteningly weak sounds emerged from the orchestra pit. The Brooklyn Philharmonic, it turned out, was missing a good many of its members.

The storm was not the only problem. Several of the female parts were being played by men, and Peter Wing Healey, who had the role of the portly Mrs. Stahlbaum, was wearing an oddly bulky scarf swathed around his neck. It turned out he had earlier waxed his chest to remove the hairs and had been stricken with an unpleasant rash. The ballet was nevertheless joyfully performed and rapturously received, and afterward it was in a state of festive euphoria that the special guests, followed by the cast under the leadership of Mr. Morris, repaired by special train to a spectacular supper in the magnificent former main waiting room of Grand Central Terminal (it was decked out with more than two thousand candles), where they were greeted by a large male choir wearing red bow-ties and singing carols.

Filled with caviar and artichoke hearts, everybody went home happy, buoyed up by words of gratitude from the organizers for the courage and self-sacrifice they had shown in battling their way to Brooklyn through the flood. They would have required less courage and self-sacrifice, however, if they had used the subway. While the journey by car had taken some people as much as two hours, they could have boarded a train in midtown at six-forty and got to BAM by seven.

POETRY UNDERGROUND

ANOTHER good thing about the subway is that soon passengers will be able to read two poems in every car of every train. The poems are being installed between advertisements in an effort to raise people's spirits. The president of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, Alan F. Kiepper, recently complained about the depressing subject matter of most subway ads. "It's all there," he said. "Hemorrhoids, unwanted pregnancy, drug addiction. That's a lot to deal with, and it may have something to do with the low-down feeling New Yorkers associate with the trains." Under a program called Poetry in Motion and being carried out by the M.T.A. and the Poetry Society of America, works by Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, William Butler Yeats, and Lucille Clifton have already been put in place.

Probably none of this would be happening if Mr. Kiepper weren't a poet himself. He described a startling experience he'd had as a consequence of his own program. "It was on a Brooklyn-bound A train," he said. "I was reading the Emily Dickinson poem ' "Hope" is the Thing with Feathers,' which is mounted in the train. I'd read it dozens of times. It had become routine—like reading the back of a cereal box. But I read it again, and—bang!—I got it. For a moment, everything was clear. Other things in my life, confusing things, also seemed to make sense."

Cynthia Atkins, a young poet employed by the Poetry Society of America to help select the works displayed on the subway, hopes that the program may

ANDRZEJ CZECZOT

"change the reality down there," and explains, "We want poetry to be part of daily life, something that has to be accepted and dealt with. We know that the task ahead of us is a difficult one. We know that people are intimidated and spooked by poetry. But is a poem really any more frightening than a poster for wart removal?"

HEART OF THE COUNTRY

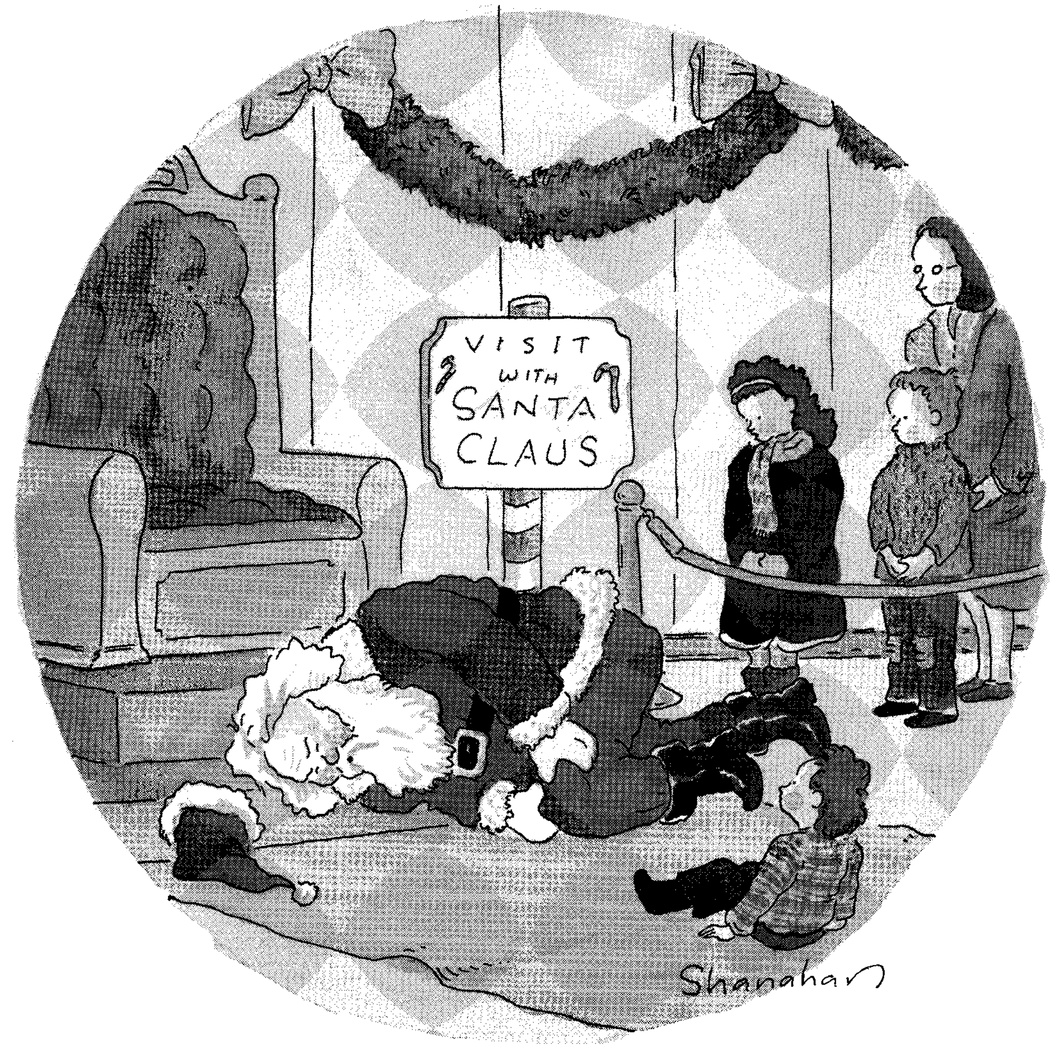
HANK WILLIAMS, who was to country music what Elvis Presley was to rock and roll, died forty years ago—on New Year's Day, 1953, in the back seat of his baby-blue Cadillac, on the way to a concert in Canton, Ohio. He was a skeletal twenty-nine, bested by drugs and alcohol. But by then Williams had written at least a hundred and twenty-five songs, many of them destined to inhabit part of every American's national memory: "Hey, Good Lookin'," "Your Cheatin' Heart," "Jambalaya," "I Saw the Light."

The interest in Williamsiana is unflagging. The complete lyrics are about to be published by St. Martin's, and Polygram has been reissuing every note on compact disk—the funny, direct, and lyrical explorations of love, jealousy, loneliness, neurotic obsession, sin, and redemption which make up honky-tonk music. While it is impossible to understand Connecticut's George Bush through country music (his professed infatuation with it drove people a little crazy), it is probably impossible to understand Arkansas's Bill Clinton without it.

Richard Emmet, a retired Alabama judge who knew the Williams family in Montgomery in the nineteen-forties, says, "With these people, there is a lot of honesty about looking at life, and saying, 'Hey, I've been my own worst enemy,' and acknowledging their sinfulness and the fact that their evil nature can get the best of them." Emmet is especially struck by Williams' enlightened views on race, which he finds almost miraculous for someone who grew up in Georgiana, Alabama, in the nineteen-thirties. He says of Williams' recitative "The Funeral," a description of a burial service for a black child, "That's amazing that this was the descendant of true rednecks, looking at the black race and seeing all they had to go through to get truth and beauty. It's almost mystical."

Clinton, born in Hope, Arkansas, in the nineteen-forties, also arrived early at his modern views on race. Williams' older sister, Irene Williams Smith, has been struck by Clinton's fervent inclusiveness. "It's wonderful the way he's reaching out to touch everybody," she says. Hank Williams put Southern hyperbole of the sort that Clinton employs into song: love would get him so confused that "I tried to eat a steak with a big old tablespoon," or he'd be so miserable that "Lord, I'd have to get better before I could die." George William Koon, an English professor at Clemson University and the most scholarly biographer of Williams, has gone as far as to compare Williams to a Romantic poet like Shelley, who favored the synesthetic image, a mixing of the senses. Koon points to the Williams line "The silence of a falling star lights up a purple sky."

Forty years after Williams' death, you can hear on even his earliest records, made when he was barely out of his teens, the authority of a born performer. You can imagine how he affected the post-Second World War generation, including the man who has become its most successful politician.

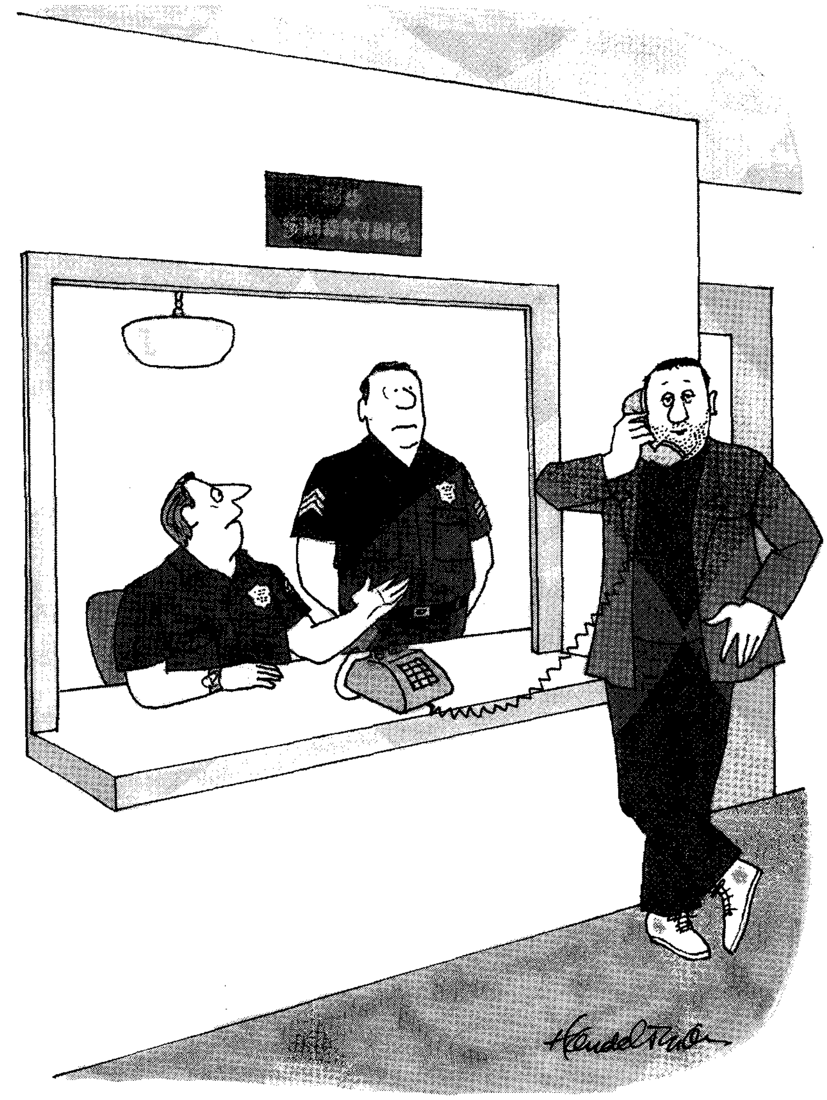


"The knees are the first to go."

ANCHORS AWAY

"WE just knew that in our hearts we were hip-hop," Diane Sawyer said, referring to herself and Lesley Stahl. Others might never have suspected as much, but these two *éminences blondes* of the television news were determined to prove it. They bought themselves chaotically tousled blond wigs, hired five hip-hop dancers, and took to the floor in front of a crowd of media celebrities who had furtively assembled at the CBS studios last week for a surprise party to celebrate the seventieth birthday of Don Hewitt, the creator of "60 Minutes." Ms. Sawyer, now co-anchor of ABC's "PrimeTime Live," was Ms. Stahl's predecessor as correspondent and co-editor on Mr. Hewitt's program. It was the idea of Joan Ganz Cooney, of "Sesame Street" fame, that they should cast themselves as "Don's blondes," and their idea that they should serenade him with a rap song.

With the hip-hop dancers in the background rudely chanting "Don't mess with them bitches," the two women forged pluckily ahead. "Don's blondes, he likes us sweet and vicious," they sang with gusto, and Ms. Stahl sang, "I'm Don's pet, I'm his goddess. He likes me better than he likes Mike Wallace." Then came a duet about how Mr. Hewitt had schooled them for the small screen: "He makes you feel good, then he makes you look swell. We want to see him try it with Anita Hill." Everybody laughed and cheered—even Mike Wallace, about whom the hip-hop dancers had lustily chanted, "He's a really old man, he's a really old man." Don Hewitt, according to Ms. Sawyer, was "howling." Another highlight of the cabaret was a supremely confident solo by Liz Smith, *Newsday's* gossip columnist: "Ol' man Hewitt," sung to the tune of "Ol' Man River" in a voice almost as deep as Paul Robeson's. It's a pleasure to find that some successful people are still willing to risk making fools of themselves.



"I told him he was allowed one phone call. He's making a pledge to Channel 13."

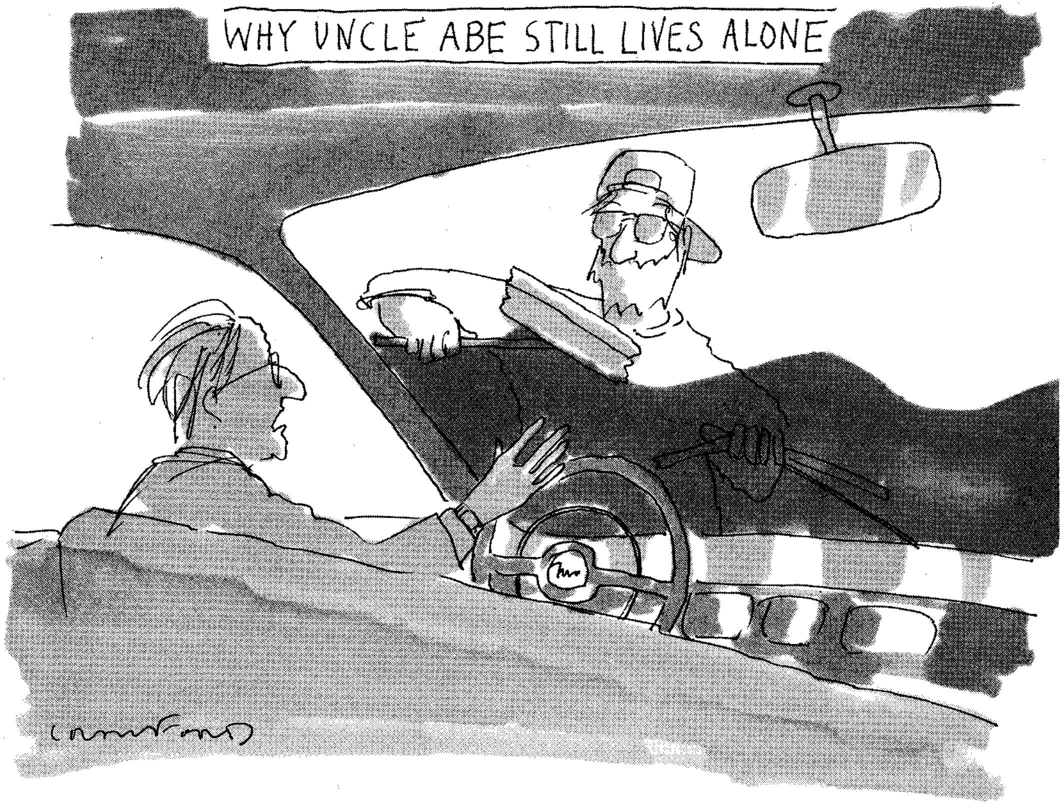
• •

COMBAT DUTY

THE midtown office of the Italian writer Oriana Fallaci has a little hand-lettered sign on the door that says, simply, "Please Go Away." But the visitor who dares to enter receives a warm welcome. Ms. Fallaci, famous for her obsession with war and her confrontational interviews with men of power, turns out to be small and animated, with almond-shaped blue eyes and an air of insouciant chic. "I am tired of this 'Joan of Arc' thing," she remarks at one point. "People always expect me to be running around with a helmet on or a Kalashnikov in my hand. When I meet them, they say, with surprise, 'But your nails are red!' I tell them, 'What do you want? That I be dressed to die on the pyre?' "

Ms. Fallaci's latest novel, "Inshallah," has just been published here, by Doubleday, in her own English translation. It tells the story of the Italian contingent that made up a third of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Beirut in 1983—the troubled year in which Lebanese terrorists blew up a French military barracks and the United States Marine headquarters, leaving more than two hundred and fifty people dead. Ms. Fallaci, who went to Beirut right after the tragedy, says, "I started talking to the Italian soldiers. Why? Because I love soldiers. They are my children. They are just kids who live in fear, whom we send to kill and to die. People kept asking me, 'For whom are you here?' I didn't know. I kept going back until the very end, when the Italians left Beirut. I did not even suspect that I was pregnant with a novel. I found it out almost one year later."

The novel's gestation period was five and a half years, and since its birth "Inshallah" has been a towering success in Italy, selling more than six hundred thousand hardcover copies over the past two years. She calls the book a "huge fresco," and, indeed, it is more than just a book about war. It is also a book about love and about destiny, as its title suggests: "Inshallah" is Arabic for "As God


WHY UNCLE ABE STILL LIVES ALONE

"You call that clean?"

wills." "One has to realize that war is a part of life," she says. "I have been living all my life expecting the Third World War, the one between the United States and what was the Soviet Union, to burst. Luckily, it hasn't—but, like a gas which is compressed and escapes through small holes, war has come out in many other places, such as Yugoslavia."

Ms. Fallaci has been fighting her own war these days—a quietly ferocious struggle against cancer. On being asked about her preoccupation with destiny, she says, "I've got to believe in destiny. I have risked my life so much, and so many times. And sometimes I'm surprised I didn't die in Vietnam, I didn't die in Bangladesh, I didn't die in Beirut. Destiny exists the moment you are born. And it exists the moment and the way you die." She smiles faintly and adds, "In between, you can make a few corrections."

After a pause, Ms. Fallaci continues, "Doing interviews, I tried always to place each person into the frame of the historical moment. Indirectly, I tried to convey history through that person. But also I tried to give an idea of the individual. A human being, if he is well described, is forever. But with journalism you never have time to polish, and you never can invent. Because of this, I felt handcuffed as a journalist."

FRUIT PASSION

For the past few weeks, the late night market at Hunts Point has been brimming with clementines, and Korean grocery stores all over town are exhibiting them in profusion. People often mistake clementines for tangerines, and, even up close, the two look a lot alike. Both belong to the family of mandarins, which—unlike other citrus families—have loose skins and are very easy to peel. The clementine, though, is especially tempting, because it is almost without seeds. And, what is more important, it tastes delicious.

The annual clementine deluge always takes place as the holidays get under way, and has come to be associated with them, but the link is purely coincidental, dictated by the clementine's growing season. Because it doesn't require a lot of heat, it matures early for an orange; but its season is relatively short, starting in late November, peaking at the end of December, and continuing until about mid-March. It thrives in dry climates, like that of the Mediterranean.

Of various theories about the clementine's origin, the most popular is that it was created by accident in North Africa around 1900. According to botanical legend, a priest named Clément Rodier, who was working in an orphanage called Pères du Saint-Esprit, in Misserghin, a tiny village in Algeria, planted some mandarin seedlings in the orphanage garden, and they were accidentally pollinated by another species of orange. The aberrant result was eventually given the name clementine by the Horticultural Society of Algiers.

Although the United States Department of Agriculture introduced the clementine into Florida and California at the beginning of this century, there is no real domestic crop, and all clementines sold here are imported from either Spain or Morocco. It is sometimes assumed that growers here ignore them because the fruit is considered too small for Americans, who like everything big, but Dr. C. Jack Hearn, of the U.S.D.A.'s Horticultural Research Laboratory, in Orlando, says that the real reason is that the humidity in the air causes it to cross-pollinate and consequently grow seeds.

Charles Balducci, who buys the produce for his family's food stores, says he thinks that sales of clementines in the New York region have increased by about twenty per cent each year over the last decade. But he makes the point that clementines are still much more popular in Canada than in the United States, where their markets extend only from New York west to Chicago and down the coast to Philadelphia. "Canada gets about seventy per cent of the clementines arriving in this hemisphere," Mr. Balducci says. "And the consumption in Europe is many, many times that." ♦

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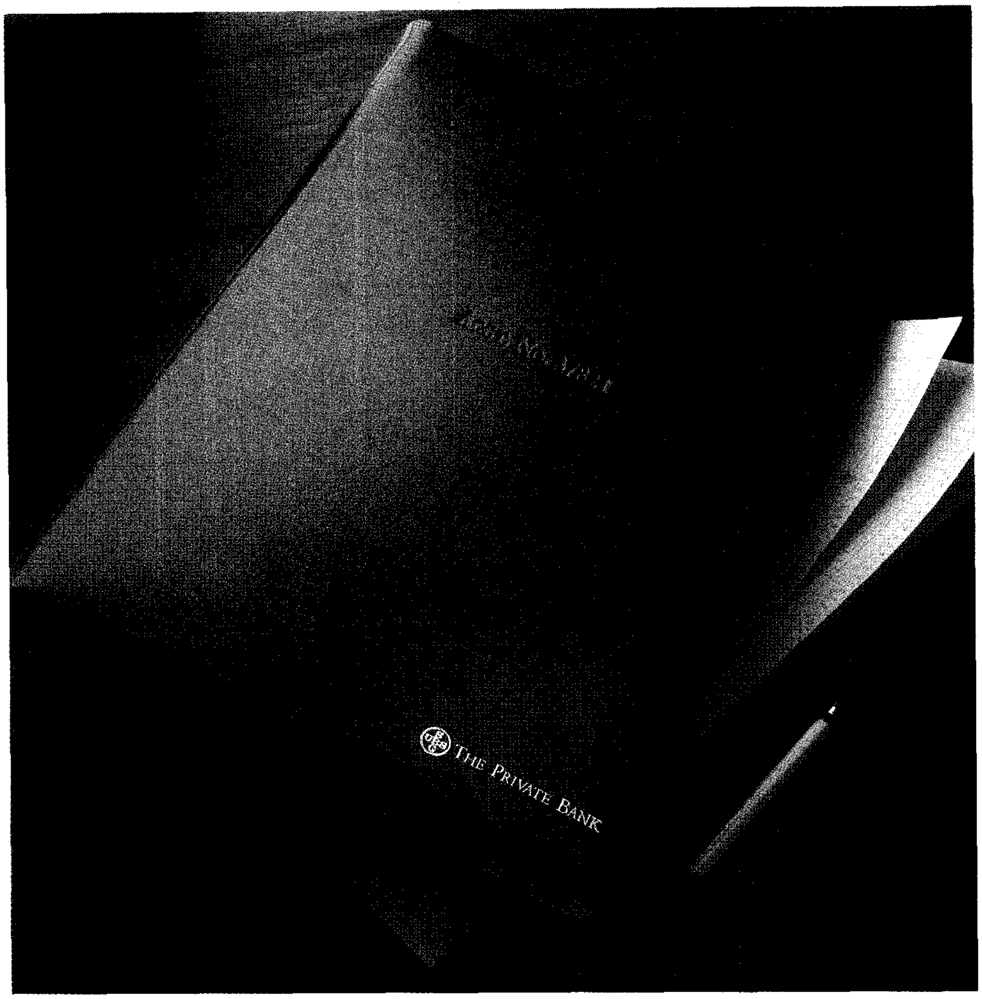

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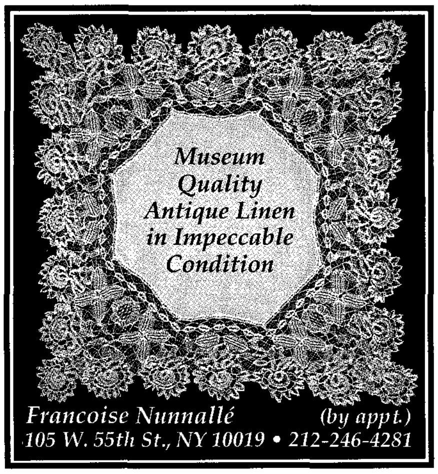

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

ALL THE PRESIDENT'S WARS

by Sidney Blumenthal

At the Heritage Foundation, the red brick redoubt of conservatism situated behind the Senate office buildings on Capitol Hill, a group called the Third Generation gathered a week after the election for a sombre discussion of the factors that had led to George Bush's defeat. Ardent young right-wingers, they had named themselves as inheritors of a future vouchsafed them by two generations of postwar conservatism, personified by William F. Buckley, Jr., and Ronald Reagan, respectively. Now Bush—the pretender, the betrayer, the wastrel—had ruined it all. He had squandered the patrimony of power that was supposed to last their lifetimes. Suddenly, two pranksters bearing on a platter a rubber mask of George Bush, stuffed with red crêpe paper to resemble gore, and an instructional sign, "AVAILABLE FOR BEATING AND MUTILATION," marched into the Heritage auditorium and up the aisle—and post-election dejection gave way to frenzied ecstasy. By performing the pagan rite of symbolic beheading, the disinherited scions attempted to exorcise the Bush curse.

A month after the election, the savaging of the President, especially by his putative supporters, was halted abruptly by a war. Bush's intervention in Somalia may be taken as a humanitarian crusade, without reference to political or even national interest; assuming the throne of divinity, the President announced the action as "God's work." But it is also an exercise in rescue of a damaged image. Intervention in the Horn of Africa has wrapped Bush in protective and comfortable raiment, saving him from ridicule and pity in his final days.

It has been suggested that the prime mover in Somalia was not Bush but Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The option for intervention had existed for at least four months, a State Department official told me recently, and Powell had opposed it. With the election over, he reversed his opinion quite precipitately. Intervention in Somalia met his criterion, stipulated by the Vietnam Syndrome, of being extremely low-risk—far more so than in Haiti or Bosnia (where, it could be argued, there is more relevance to the national interest of the United States). In a private meeting with President-elect Clinton, Powell tried to steer him away from Bosnia—far away, like Bush. An influential Democrat to whom Clinton confided details of the meeting says that Powell claimed it would take a half-million United States troops to rescue Bosnia—a nightmare scenario that was fantasy, for none of the plans prepared by the State Department, which listed many possibilities, included sending United States troops.

The Somalian intervention may or may not relieve the suffering of the Somalis. It has already relieved the tension left by the bitter frustrations of the failed Bush-reëlection campaign. From the beginning of Bush's Presidency, the primacy of foreign policy was the first law. Toward the campaign's end, when all else had failed, he ran an ad raising the spectre of unspecified crisis abroad that would require only him. At the same time, he secretly tried to dragoon President Boris Yeltsin of Russia, to en-

GERARD NICOLAS

list him as late as a week before Election Day against Bill Clinton. A Russian diplomatic source says that Bush and his men depicted the Democratic candidate as a "socialist" in the mold of Yeltsin's enemies. By playing on Yeltsin's volatile emotions, the Bush camp hoped to provoke him into making an anti-Clinton statement. At the same time, some Bush aides wished that Yeltsin might fall, and thus rekindle fear of a new Cold War; in this perfect scenario—the return of the past—Bush would seem contemporary again. But the foreign-policy President, under attack precisely for having abandoned domestic affairs, had maneuvered himself into a position where any dramatic international initiative on his part would excite a backlash of public cynicism. He had achieved a zero-sum position, where almost anything he did on one front was understood as subtracting from the other. What he had thought would be his greatest strength in the election became his weakness.

Now, with the campaign over, the President was freed from his dilemma. His inarticulateness created a vacuum into which rushed theories about his motives. There was much speculation about his psychological depression. At Thanksgiving, in Kennebunkport, he and his wife dined alone; his extended family, which had joyously filled the dais at the Republican Convention, was apparently not permitted to solace him. His public speech was filled with figures of death and dying. Thus the Somalian rescue, a politically posthumous act, may be interpreted as Bush's attempt at psychological as well as political resurrection.

In four years, on three continents, Bush has staged three large military operations. These wars once made him the most popular President of the twentieth century, but his natural state without war was political collapse. By inflating him so grandly, war also made possible his sudden deflations; in retrospect, they seem almost inevitable. War and collapse, war and collapse: the Somalian war fits the pattern, and holds the cycle at a zenith.

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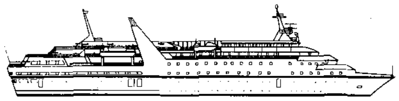

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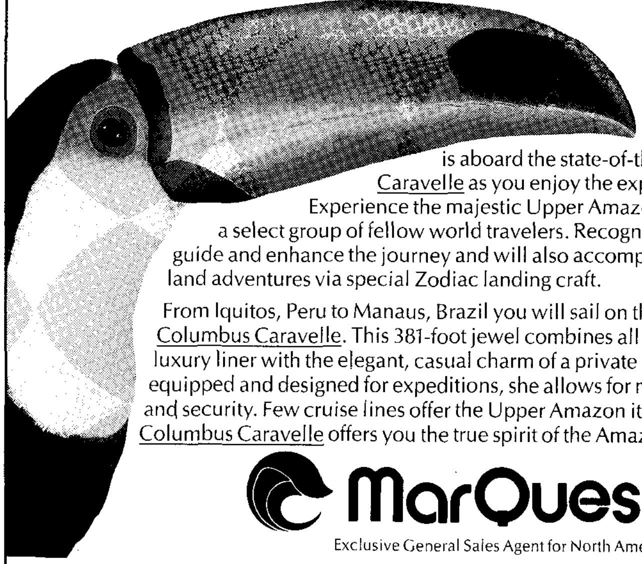

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Dana Carvey, for the White House staff. With the war flags flying again, the Carvey event became a grander gesture, the laughs more in the tradition of Bob Hope. Bush was again Commander-in-Chief, bolstering morale; by maximizing this opportunity for self-deprecation, he seemed magnanimous. The star of "Saturday Night Live" explained to the President's staff that his impersonation of George Bush was composed of Mister Rogers with an overlay of John Wayne. "You put them together, you got George Herbert Walker Bush," he said. No one is kinder and gentler than Mister Rogers, no one tougher than John Wayne. By exposing his comic method, Carvey revealed dichotomies of political character which Bush has never been able to reconcile convincingly: the wimp and the hero. Bush mounted the stage, replacing his impersonator, and said, "And he said, 'I hope I've never crossed the line.' And I knew exactly what he meant. And as far as I'm concerned, he never has. And the fact that we can laugh at each other is a very fundamental thing. I'm not sure on November 4th that the invitation would have gone out and had the same enthusiasm, but we're shifting gears."

Merry Christmas

Few things in the campaign were comfortable for Bush, who had been taught not to brag or snipe and often missed the mark when he tried. But in the cozy refuge of the parlor, the soon-to-be-former President was a commanding figure. There his manners counted again; his upbringing did not have to be cloaked. No more campaigning meant restoration of politesse. The skills that had served him well as a diplomat and had substituted for an ideology could be displayed without shame. With Marines abroad, staff at his bidding, and a court jester, the President was back in control.

"The problem with George Bush was that he was President," said a prominent Republican political consultant who had helped get him elected. It was Bush's tragedy to preside over an ancien régime, trying to remain true to the tenets that had brought it to crisis. He was born to rule; until he was elected President, he was allowed to help his political superiors rule because he played by their rules. The Yale baseball captain was a team player, the member of Skull and Bones a clubman. (When his son Neil got into legal trouble over his involvement in the Silverado Savings & Loan, Bush turned to an old Bonesman, Thomas "Lud" Ashley, to head a defense committee. That Ashley had been a Democratic congressman was an irrelevant, if convenient, quirk.) The Republican Party in which Bush rose was a different association from the one known to his father, run by men whom Senator Prescott Bush, of Connecticut, might never have voted to admit to the Metropolitan Club. One can imagine a career in banking for young George Bush. He would have tried to equal or surpass his father's Wall Street achievement by ingratiating himself with brash new traders, a crowd that wasn't really his but found his patrician façade useful. He would have been elevated and, eventually, gone down, a fading emblem of an enterprise he had not built or truly understood.

Bush was a status-quo man. Even his overnight switches on economics and abortion when he was chosen as Reagan's running mate were adaptations to a status quo—a new one, in the G.O.P., and then in the government. Bush's rhetoric changed, but the man remained the same. It was his easy malleability, which some mistook for cravenness, that gave him his political resilience. Even before Reagan, Bush had adapted to Richard Nixon. He always drew upon the same instincts: he was infinitely adaptable as a reliable placeman.

BUSH'S pattern of free-fall reversed by war (or its political equivalent) began the moment he set out in search of the Presidency. In the 1988 campaign, his ferocious attacks on his opponent were forced on him by his handlers because he had virtually collapsed as a candidate, even after winning the G.O.P. primaries. His unfavorable ratings topped forty per cent, making him almost unelectable by ordinary standards. On his own, he could not summon "the vision thing," so he pretended that his

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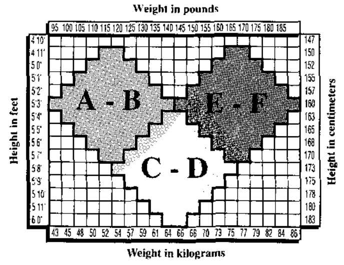

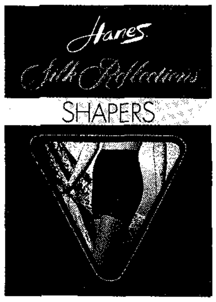

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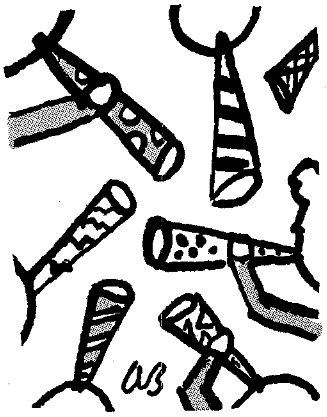
unrelenting negativity was a positive assertion of "values." As in the real wars to come, Bush sustained himself by opposing an enemy. The brutal campaigning that got him elected, however, hardly resolved the problem at the heart of his political character.

The sine curve of Bush's Presidency was nearly as predictable as geometry, if his campaign behavior is taken as the axiom. The public wanted to continue and extend the prosperity of the Reagan era while tempering its excesses. Bush was elected, in effect, with Michael Dukakis's mandate: competence, not ideology. Bush's identity as an old-money Yankee implicitly carried a promise of change: he wasn't the new-money Californian. (At the Republican Convention in New Orleans, Nancy Reagan, seated in the V.I.P. section, acidly remarked, upon hearing the acceptance speech, "Kinder and gentler than whom?") Bush straddled a polarity: the desire for federal action and the demand for conservative consistency. Thus he dramatized the hollowness of his early Presidency. A staged purchase of crack in Lafayette Park highlighted the war on drugs—Bush's first war. A staged visit to a Maryland elementary school showcased him as the education President. (His touted education summit with national leaders, at the University of Virginia, in 1989, produced a modest set of goals only because of the pressure exerted by the summit's co-chairman, Governor Bill Clinton, of Arkansas. In tortured meetings over the next year, Bush's policy aides systematically frustrated Clinton's in their jointly assigned task of creating a practical program.) And by posing against the backdrop of the Pacific, Bush became the environmental President.



His photo opportunities were unlike Reagan's, which were the scrim for ideological imperatives. When the projections of an idealized Bush ceased, nothing remained. A high Bush Administration official who worked intimately with the President from the beginning said recently, "Where was the guiding concept? There was none. It's been a problem for the whole Bush Presidency. There hasn't been a stable concept that aligns with a stable President. The process of holding it together was self-destructive." Reagan had the conviction that "government is the problem," but turning that conviction into policy required a dynamic executive to introduce radical change. Bush carried on by means of inertia, the volunteers of the Points of Light Foundation, and, at various junctures, the Marines.

In his first year, Bush expected to spend his entire term as a Cold War President. He commissioned his national-security apparatus to conduct a "strategic review," which, after five months of Presidential stasis, produced an approach his National Security Council spokesmen referred to with pride as "status quo plus." Later, criticized by no less a personage than Ronald Reagan for missing the opportunity presented by Mikhail Gorbachev, Bush began to jerk himself onto a different course. Still, George Mitchell, the Senate Majority Leader, accused Bush of "timidity"—the old wimp charge, which always rankled. In the 1988 campaign, Bush had sent James Baker to negotiate with *Newsweek's* editors over the use of the word "wimp." Now Baker waved poll numbers at Mitchell: "When the President of the United States is rocking along with a seventy-per-cent approval rating on his handling of foreign policy, if I were the leader of the opposition, I might have something similar to say." The crumbling of Communism in Eastern Europe drove Bush's poll numbers even higher. But in Panama, at the crucial moment, he hesitated to support a coup attempt against Manuel Noriega, who survived to taunt him. Senator Lloyd Bentsen, who had been Dukakis's running mate, charged that Bush had let Noriega "out on furlough" (a clever and mean reference to Bush's clever and mean use of Willie Horton in the campaign). On December 20, 1989, Bush ordered an invasion. He was a President in charge, who could incarcerate evil. Many commentaries in the press hailed

Bush's transformation, his dispelling of the wimp image. With the Panama war, he appeared to have solidified his political identity at last. But his first real war was followed rapidly by his first collapse—a harbinger of his fate after the Gulf War.

Insolvency had become the regime's true foundation, set in place by Reagan. David Stockman, Reagan's budget director, had known from the start that cutting taxes and raising expenditures would not miraculously provide more revenues, as the supply-siders argued; rather, the result would be enormous deficits and government paralysis. In his memoir Stockman wrote, "In fact, it was the basic assumptions and fiscal architecture of the Reagan Revolution itself which first introduced the folly that now envelops our economic governance." The revolution made fiscal policy impotent, depriving the government of its chief instrument for adjusting the economy in the post-Second World War period. The political effects were even more far-reaching. With no funds available for social initiatives, Democrats were faced with the unpalatable choice of raising taxes or cutting programs. Since limiting government seemed the only approach, ideological momentum shifted decisively to the Republicans.

"Read my lips—no new taxes": Bush's ironclad campaign promise was a pledge to pursue the politics of insolvency. Upon his election, he could have gone through the exercise of an elaborate economic audit and then, shocked by the report, separated himself from Reagan's legacy. But that would have meant confronting his right wing—something he was never able to do. Since his entry into politics, in Texas, as a Goldwater supporter, he had constantly tried to allay the right's suspicions that he was the heir of Thomas E. Dewey. By the spring of 1990, the sequester of funds required by the Gramm-Rudman Act, another hobbling Reagan-era legacy, threatened the programs that enjoyed bipartisan support, such as Medicare. Without a budget deal, the federal government would implode. Bush had hoped all along that doing nothing would suffice. He did not wish to offend his right, or to negotiate with Congress for fear of coming out the loser in a bidding war. His budget

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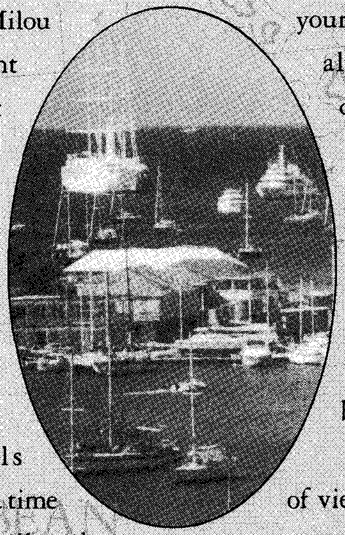

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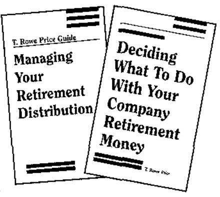
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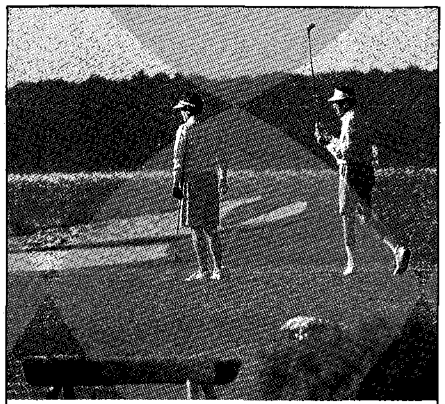

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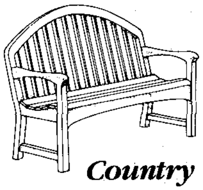

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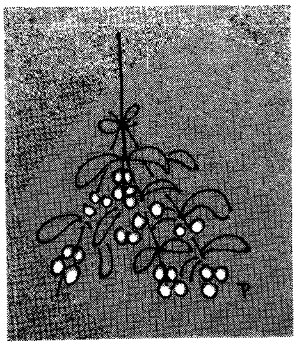
director, Richard Darman, who had opposed the "Read my lips" pledge, stepped in. After much rancorous opposition from that conservative bastion the House Republican caucus, a budget deal was agreed upon: it raised taxes but established walls in the budget to isolate revenues in categories. Darman's accomplishment allowed the political game of insolvency to go on; social policy remained thwarted. Throughout the process, Bush wavered. "Read my hips," he said at one point as he raced in his jogging shorts away from the press corps, waggling his behind. He embraced the deal his negotiators had hammered out, but only at the last minute, almost passively ("Looks O.K. to me"), and then put more distance between himself and it, repeatedly calling it all a "mistake." Darman's reward for filling the role thrust on him by Bush was to be demonized by the right as the satanic figure who had tempted the President off the shining path.

The decisive Bush—an image wrought by the Panama war—had not stuck. By the time of the budget deal, in October of 1990, the crisis of confidence that had plagued the country in the late nineteen-seventies and been dormant during the Reagan years awoke with accusatory roars. According to that month's ABC News/Washington *Post* poll, seventy-nine per cent of the people believed the nation was on the wrong track. Once again, Bush seemed to face political ruin. And once again the cries were quelled by a triumph of arms.



By the conclusion of the hundred-hour Gulf War, Bush was Caesar: his popularity rating hit ninety per cent, the highest ever recorded for a President. Bush stood at the foot of Pennsylvania Avenue to salute General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, marching before thousands of lockstepping troops. Independence Mall was a theme park of military technology. Small boys clambered over tanks and Patriot-missile batteries. Charles Krauthammer, a columnist for the Washington *Post*, caught the triumphalist tone. "Military schools will long be studying Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf's march through the Gulf," he wrote. "Government schools will be studying Mr. Bush's march through Washington."

For Bush, though, the Gulf War was twilight's last gleaming. It was a victory from which he never recovered. His rhetoric was grandiloquent and all-encompassing. At the end of the Cold War, with America unchallenged by any great power, he made his most expansive promise: in his speech announcing Desert Storm, he declared, "We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order." (The phrase, originating with Woodrow Wilson, was suggested to Bush by his national-security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, during an idyll off Kennebunkport, as their fishing lines dangled.) In that speech, the President quoted a sergeant as saying, "What we're doing is going to chart the future of the world for the next one hundred years." But Bush could never define the new world order, and he dropped it. In an address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 1991, he restated the proposition: "In short, we seek a Pax Universalis, built upon a shared understanding." He failed to spell out his notion of universal peace as a policy, and never mentioned it again.

By mobilizing national energies for war while maintaining passivity on the domestic front, Bush prepared his own disintegration. During the buildup in the Gulf, two of his top officials were candid in describing his domestic attitude. In December, 1990, with a recession clearly in view, Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady said, "I don't think it's the end of the world even if we have a recession. We'll pull back out of it again. No big deal." A month earlier, John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, had pronounced what may be taken as the credo of the Bush Administration: "Frankly, this President doesn't need another single piece of legislation, unless it's absolutely right. There's not a single piece of legislation that need be passed in the two years for this President. In fact, if Congress wants to come

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together, adjourn, and leave, it's all right with us."

Bush was a war President unlike any other since Polk; all the rest, from Lincoln through Nixon, had consistently believed in the efficacy of government. Bush's reluctance to use the federal instrument at home after deploying the military abroad was the very soul of contradiction—at least, in the American tradition. Foreign policy did not, as he assumed, offset domestic; instead, the contrast of command and fecklessness rapidly diminished him. War inflated the illusion of omnipotence—and then punctured it. Focus groups mustered by the Bush campaign in mid-1992 revealed that the Gulf War set immutably in voters' minds the idea of Bush as a strong leader. "They thought he was very effective," a senior Administration official explained after the election. "If he wanted to, he could solve their problems. When he didn't, it made them resentful. And it grew into anger. It might have been better if they'd thought he was a nice guy who was ineffective." A Bush adviser lamented, about the period immediately following the Gulf War, "We used our mandate to do what?"

The Russian coup in August, to which Bush reacted uncertainly at first, even suggesting that he might work with the plotters, definitively marked the line between an old world and a new one. The end of Communism in the Soviet Union also removed the last vestiges of context for Bush's received political world. Eight months after the Gulf War, only thirty-nine per cent of the public expressed satisfaction with the way the country was going, according to a Gallup poll. Ancient animosities within the G.O.P., predating the Cold War, rose from the depths, like the submerged antagonisms within newly liberated Eastern Europe. "All the institutions of the Cold War . . . must be reëxamined," Patrick Buchanan said on December 10, 1991, announcing his challenge to Bush for the Republican nomination. "Why am I running? Because we Republicans can no longer say it is all the liberals' fault." Buchanan's central theme was Bush's obsolescence: "He is yesterday." The President scurried to New Hampshire to plead his case: "Message: I care. . . . Don't cry for me, Argentina!" Though Buchanan lost every primary, he sent Bush into a state of political and social vertigo.

BETWEEN 1988 and 1992, the idea of decline moved from a controversy among intellectuals to conventional wisdom among the masses. Bush's rhetoric in 1988 was full of oblique references to a book on "imperial overstretch"—"The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers," by a Yale historian, Paul Kennedy, whose views Bush distorted and conflated with Dukakis's. "My opponent's view of the world sees a long slow decline for our country, an inevitable fall mandated by impersonal historical forces," Bush said in his acceptance speech at the Republican Convention. By claiming unbridled optimism for himself, with "Don't Worry, Be Happy" as his unofficial campaign theme song, Bush set up an easy choice. By June of 1992, a remarkable revolution in assumptions had taken place: the Gallup poll recorded that eighty-four per cent of the people were dissatisfied with the state of the nation. While pictures of the President wandering dazed amid the wasteland of still smoldering South Central Los Angeles were being broadcast, the moment came for the strongman who would reverse national decline by abolishing politics itself: Ross Perot.

Lacking strategy or program, Bush's campaign handlers greeted the mercurial billionaire as a serendipitous savior. Bill Clinton, scourged and flailed, "seemed dead and buried," said a senior Bush adviser. "Everybody felt the real threat was Perot. There was a bandwagon effect. The press was hyping it that way. Christ, the guy was leading in every state in the polls." So Perot became the linchpin of what passed for a Bush strategy. Clinton would be supplanted, the reasoning went, by Perot; his paranoia, with which the Bush team had had extensive experience, would somehow stay subsumed until Clinton was a negligible factor, and then Perot would unleash his lunatic self. "I anticipated his self-destruction," a high Bush Administration official said. "His authoritarian personality emerges in ugly ways. What we needed was for Perot to stay in." But the ticking of Perot's inner clock accelerated and, with its alarm ringing, he took himself out of the race at the most advantageous moment for Clinton. Once again, the Bush general staff was planless.

d. ehrenberg

The G.O.P. Convention's organizers were so unsure of their candidate's appeal that they could not even count on the conservative base, so the Convention was calculated as a festival of the right. Yet it was as a distracted afterthought that the planners offered Buchanan the first speech of the first night, making him the de-facto keynoter. That his effect might be dire, for better or worse, did not occur to them. His calls for "cultural war" and "religious war" climaxed with terrifying images of race war. But Buchanan, after all, had earlier run against Bush and did not speak for him. The truly irreparable damage, according to a senior Bush adviser who played a major role in the campaign, was done by Marilyn Quayle. On "Family Values Night," the Vice-President's wife claimed that women did not want to be "liberated from their essential nature" by feminists. She went on, "Much has been said lately about the need in this country for a new generation of leadership; that the moment has come for a couple of baby boomers to take the helm of this great and complex nation; that the time has come for generational change. Not everyone joined the counterculture, not everyone demonstrated, dropped out, took drugs, joined in the sexual revolution, or dodged the draft."

"It was a tough policy speech by a person who didn't have a policy position," the Bush aide said. "People knew Buchanan and Bush differed. But Marilyn was different. She looked like she was speaking for a consensus in the

Party." Her message more than compounded Buchanan's. Her status as Republican princess graced it with legitimacy. The authority of the right seemed unassailable. Bush's acceptance speech was thus overwhelmed before it was delivered. In any case, it was "intellectually flabby, undeveloped, a tug of war of speechwriters"—so a senior adviser who helped write it now admits. At the only Convention where George Bush was the President, he buckled again under the weight of his fear of the right. By virtue of his political weakness, he found himself waging a Kulturkampf.

BUSH'S cultural and generational war against "the new man," as he called Bill Clinton, was haphazard. In this climactic war, Bush's chief warriors were his Vice-President, a member of the younger generation, and the Vice-President's strong-willed wife. Bush would hardly have chosen Dan Quayle in 1988 if he hadn't recognized himself in the younger man—eager, malleable, energetic, sporty, insulated, a deferential heir, someone who could fit effortlessly into a lineup of Bush sons. Quayle and his wife got a good deal of their world view from their sense of mistreatment during the 1988 campaign, which offended their sense of entitlement. "I think it's good for the media to hound Bill Clinton, like they hounded me," Quayle urged, on "This Week with David Brinkley," on September 13, 1992. Drawing upon their carefully nursed resentments, the Quayles, wealthy and coddled, denigrated their own generation. "Twenty years ago women weren't supposed to admit they wanted to get married . . . or say, I love my husband, I love my children," Marilyn Quayle complained, on the "Today" show, on September 14th.

The only combat Dan Quayle ever experienced was in the Kulturkampf. In that war, he proved a hero. His task was to take back the nineteen-sixties from the counterculture, to redefine Clinton and Gore as being on the fringe of their generation. Quayle's argument was a slightly modified version of the old Nixonian Silent Majority argument on behalf of the hardworking yeomanry against the freaks. To aggrandize his own role, Quayle had to depict as apocalyptic his war to regain the nineteen-sixties. The other side must be demon-

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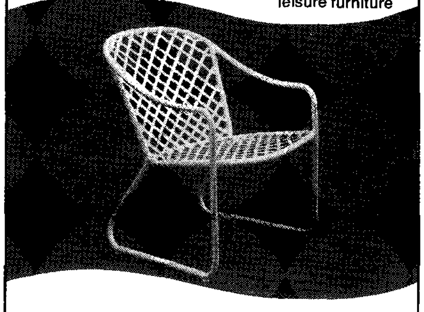

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ic. Murphy Brown must be immoral enough to be a contributing factor to the L.A. riots. The fire this time must have been lit by the cultural élite. But then this was just a strategy, a managerial device of the junior executive following the corporate advice of the C.E.O., who had announced he would do "whatever it takes." The Quayles had the insincerity of those who wished to be granted power from above. Yet their bitterness may have been partly frustration at Bush's inability to make his own case, with Quayle's jabs deliberately designed to rouse Bush to action. There was unspoken anger and perhaps embarrassment at the spectacle of a weak, convictionless father.

The more Bush's surrogates waged generational war, the more ground he lost; the more his campaign tried to reëstablish the generational cleavages of the past, the more out of touch he seemed. Bush used the Second World War and the Cold War as his reservoirs of experience for attacking Clinton as draft dodger and Moscow tourist. But this negative campaign, which had worked for Republicans since the inception of the Cold War, was an arcane exercise in historiography. It had lost its bite. (The announcement by General Dimitri Volkogonov that a search of K.G.B. files exonerated Alger Hiss came at about the time Bush was smearing Clinton for travelling to Moscow, and added an atmospheric element of dust blowing off the archives.)

The generational deficiency that truly mattered was Bush's. His Second World War combat record was only half the defining background of a man of his generation. Bush, as it happened, was the only Republican President born in this century who was not scarred by the Great Depression. Thus he lacked one of his generation's essential bona fides. (Reagan, the former Democrat, retained the appeal of a cultural Democrat despite the parvenu gloss; his father, Jack, was saved from unemployment by a New Deal job. Bush's story was of chauffeurs racing their young masters through the snow to the Greenwich Country Day School, which he attended in the nineteen-thirties.) In ways Bush never fully comprehended, even as a generational icon, he ran as an artifact; he connected himself to forces that no longer resonated. Even within his own generation, as the exit polls later showed, the generational war was a war he lost.

BUSH'S handlers based his campaign on the idea that he could not win a majority. "I never believed that he could do better than forty-two per cent," a high Administration official said. After the disastrous G.O.P. Convention, James Baker took charge, repackaging the shards of Bush's policies as a program for national "renewal." When there was no instant outpouring of support, the tactic was jettisoned. The Republicans' sporadic mimicry of the winning plan the Tories had used in the spring in Britain was the special relationship of the dog and his tail, with the tail wagging the dog. The greatest source of hope was the reappearance of Ross Perot. "Baker figured it out," explained one of his longtime associates, who worked closely with him in the campaign. "Perot had to hold votes, preventing them from moving to Clinton." If anti-Bush sentiment could be split just so, he might edge back into office with a plurality. So Baker's strategy, in the end, was based on the manipulation of public contempt for Bush. On November 3rd, he received thirty-eight per cent of the vote—less than Herbert Hoover, less than Barry Goldwater, less than any sitting President since William Howard Taft, who had had to face his predecessor, Theodore Roosevelt, as well as Woodrow Wilson.

"That's history" was among the President's favorite responses. In 1989, shortly before his inauguration, Bush was asked about his campaign, and replied, "That's history. That doesn't mean anything anymore." But the long war he is now left to fight is for a historical reputation. Some veterans of that struggle are already keenly attentive. "Bush will be like Ford," Richard Nixon commented to a friend after the election. "As soon as he leaves town, he'll no longer matter. I've been gone twenty years, but I still matter."

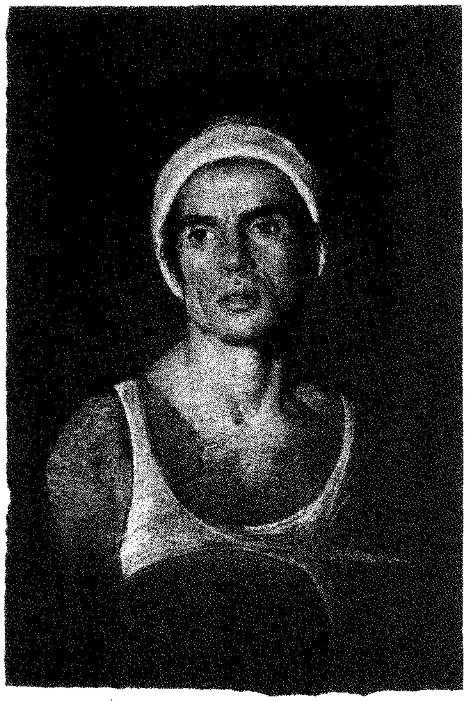
For Bush, the Somalian war is a grace note. For the first time since Patrick Buchanan entered the Presidential race, George Bush has been lifted to fifty per cent in the Gallup poll. But Bush's final scene cannot recast his Presidency. It can be only a minor reflection of the whole. That, cruel though it may be, is history. ♦

BETWEEN THE ACTS

NUREYEV'S CODA

by Luke Jennings

THE Quai Voltaire, on the left bank of the Seine, overlooks the Louvre and the Tuileries Gardens. At intervals along its length, gates give onto courtyards bounded by tall-windowed apartments. Beyond the dark velvet curtains of one such apartment, whose opulence recalls the great ballet theatres of the nineteenth century, Rudolf Nureyev lies alone in his bedroom. The heating is set to a stifling maximum, for Nureyev, once a child of the Russian winter, later the world's most famous dancer, still fears the cold. He is said to suffer from a serious, debilitating heart condition; the British tabloids report that the underlying condition is AIDS, which his friends say is untrue. Nureyev now has his good days and his bad days. On his good days, he receives close friends and speaks on the telephone, but on his bad days—and these are increasingly frequent—he lies exhausted and beyond speech.



"There are those who bring something to this life which others can only observe. Me? God gave it to me because I was lucky. And I never let it go."

BURT SILVERMAN

The eighth of October, the day of the opening of his recent production of "La Bayadère," for the Paris Opéra Ballet, was one of his bad days. The rehearsal period had been impossibly short—three weeks with the full cast—and Nureyev, assisted by the Opéra's British *répétitrice* Patricia Ruanne and the ex-Kirov ballerina Ninel Kurgapkina, had supervised the stage rehearsals at the Palais Garnier from a chaise longue banked with cushions. The dancers responded to his presence with uncharacteristic sympathy and respect, but, inevitably, the Opéra being nothing if not operatic, there were problems. The corps de ballet, on being asked to dance with stuffed parrots attached to their wrists, threatened an eco-strike. A new "Swan Lake" was in simultaneous production, and because of time shortages the final act of "La Bayadère" had to be cut. Dress rehearsals on the two nights preceding the opening were lengthy and arduous, and by the time the curtain rose at the Palais Garnier, Nureyev was worn out.

Despite a few rough, under-rehearsed edges, however, the new production was pronounced a triumph. At the evening's end, Nureyev was helped to the stage, and there, surrounded by the Opéra dancers and to a standing ovation, he was awarded the title of Commandeur des l'ordre des Arts et Lettres by Jack Lang, France's Minister of Culture. Among those invited backstage after the performance was the choreographer and one-time director of the Opéra Ballet, John Taras. He said afterward, "Rudolf was being decorated. But it was terrible. He couldn't stand, and his eyes were haunted. He insisted on coming to the supper after. It was extremely emotional. He insisted on being seated with Pierre Bergé"—the president of the Paris Opéra—"to talk about next year. It's extraordinary that he had the will power."

Two days later, Taras called at the Quai Voltaire. Nureyev talked animatedly of founding a choreographic school

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in St. Petersburg. Would Taras like to be involved?

"I said of *course*. I was very pleased."

Nureyev made the same proposal to the Dutch choreographer Rudi van Dantzig.

"I said yes," Dantzig recalls. "He was so proud. It was so moving how he talked about the possibilities, about the people there. He wanted to escape the ties to earth, to fly away to something else."

For Nureyev, despite the many locales to which he has tied himself, St. Petersburg and the Maryinsky (Kirov) Theatre remain the fountainhead of all that has given his life meaning. "The Kirov is something else," he once told me. "The stage is sacred; the city is blessed by God."

FOR those who knew, a poignant symmetry lay in Nureyev's choice of "La Bayadère" as his last gift to the Opéra. It was in this ballet, originally choreographed in 1877 by Marius Petipa, that Nureyev danced his first major role at the Kirov. He was twenty. Five years later, at Covent Garden, his staging of the third act of the ballet marked his début as a producer, and by the beginning of 1992 "La Bayadère" was the only one of the important Petipa ballets (the others being "Swan Lake," "The Sleeping Beauty," "The Nutcracker," "Raymonda," and "Don Quixote") that he had not staged in full. For Nureyev, these St. Petersburg ballets have always had particular resonance, and it is a matter of some regret to him that, having memorized the balletic equivalent of the entire works of Shakespeare, he is not consulted more often.

"You could ask Rudolf about any ballet in the Kirov repertory, and he could dance any part, any role of any ballet," says Sergiu Stefanschi, who shared a residence hall with Nureyev at the Kirov School. "He not only learned the versions that were currently being danced, but he went to people who had danced in the older versions of the same ballets; in that way, he learned many of the original Petipa variations."

"These productions are a connection with his childhood dreams of St. Petersburg," Rudi van Dantzig says. "When he got there and started learning them all, he must have been drunk on the information. He was just a poor boy from Ufa, after all."

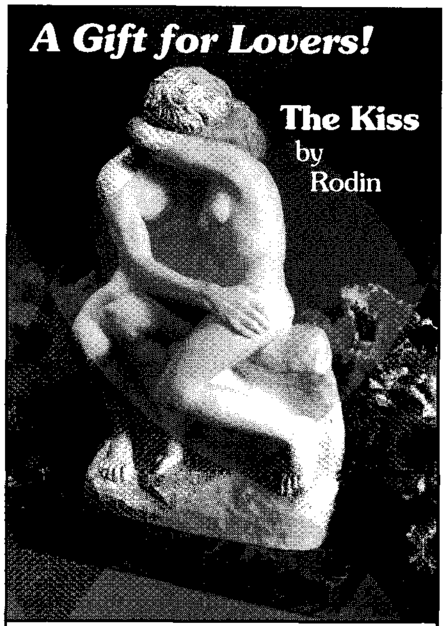
"FRIENDS?" Nureyev said to me recently. "You're lucky if you have six."

After more than thirty years of the ballet-go-round, Nureyev has come to value that solitude which François Truffaut once defined as "a melancholy consequence of his unique and exceptional state." And now that Nureyev's movements have been limited by illness only members of an inner circle of friends, most of them women of a certain age and of certain means, are admitted to his presence. Closest to Nureyev is eighty-four-year-old Maude Gosling, once the ballerina Maude Lloyd. With her late husband, the *Observer* critic Nigel Gosling, she befriended the twenty-three-year-old Nureyev when, after his defection in 1961, he first came to London. It was the Goslings who provided Nureyev with his first home in the city where he would dance so sensationally with Margot Fonteyn and the Royal Ballet. Delicate of feature and graceful of bearing, Maude is both his surrogate mother and his most highly valued confidante.

Another regular visitor to the Quai Voltaire is the British interior designer Tessa Kennedy. Kennedy met Nureyev in the early seventies and introduced him to Stavros Niarchos, one of her clients. She and Nureyev spent several summers together as the guests of Niarchos aboard his yacht, the Atlantis, and she has since travelled with Nureyev all over the world. She explains, "His friends are his family."

Jane Hermann, the former director of American Ballet Theatre, has been both a friend and an employer of Nureyev. "Ironically, in my experience, it's the people he has the most arguments with that he loves the best," she says. "He's very demanding—sometimes you can't do what he wants. He makes it very difficult to have a personal relationship when you can't accommodate him professionally. We didn't talk for a year once, but then so what?"

He is forgiven everything, the friends explain, for his honesty. One who has forgiven him more often than most is the Franco-Chilean heiress Douce François, who has been Nureyev's shadow for some fifteen years, applying her-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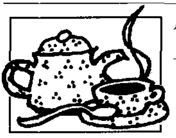
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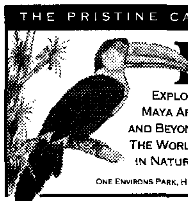
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self, more or less unbidden, to his needs. "I'm there, daily," she says. "One hundred and ten per cent for Rudolf. I want to help him avoid the stupid things and people." And she does. She found him his Quai Voltaire apartment, his maid, his butler, and his secretary. From her own apartment, in the Parc Monceau—chic, discreetly hung with photographs of Nureyev in bare-chested roles—she keeps the more prurient representatives of the world's press at bay.

"Ah, yes, Douce," people at the Opéra say. "Douce is so selfless. But, of course, you know that she and Rudolf have had the most *ferocious* divorces."

"If he gets cross, he turns it on me," François confirms philosophically.

There have been no divorces recently, though. Nureyev's friends, foremost among them François, now take turns watching over him. And dancers, like Charles Jude, of the Opéra, visit him regularly. Dancers have always understood Nureyev, have always forgiven his arrogance, have always loved his outrageous behavior and his sudden, heart-stopping kindness. They remember his dancing and, remembering, see it in every classroom, on every stage.

NUREYEV'S artistic directorship of the Paris Opéra Ballet, a position he accepted in 1983, came to an end three years ago. Byzantine intrigues and impenetrable bureaucracy have long made the Palais Garnier a graveyard of directorial intentions, but the combination in Nureyev of a stellar reputation and fundamentally cynical instincts ("There is always betrayal") enabled him to survive longer than any other appointee to the position since the nineteen-fifties. "He's made of iron," says Violette Verdy, herself an ex-director of the company.

Determined to broaden the repertoire and to turn the attention of the company outward, Nureyev brought in guest choreographers of the calibre of Glen Tetley, Jiří Kylián, Mark Morris, and William Forsythe. Rudi van Dantzig was invited to Paris from Amsterdam to mount his "Sans Armes, Citoyens."

"But things were so desperate that I went back to Holland," van Dantzig recalls. "I mean, I was getting one hour's rehearsal time a day, and none of the dancers I wanted. He rang me and begged me to come back. He said, 'My professional life is on the line with this

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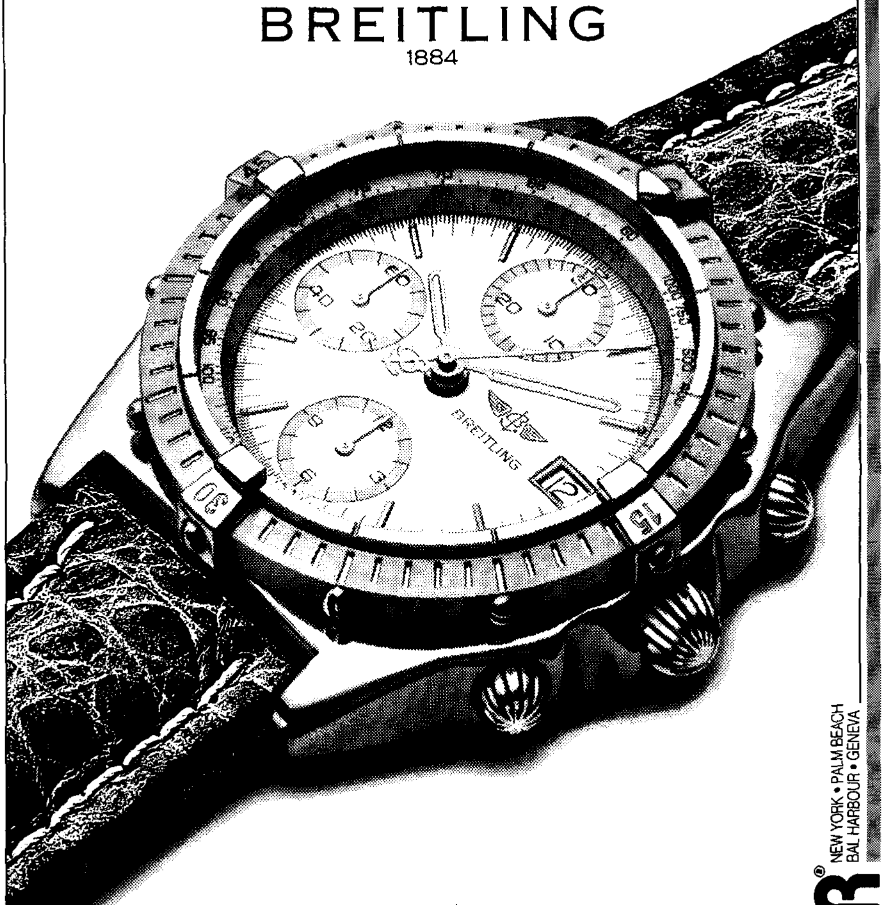

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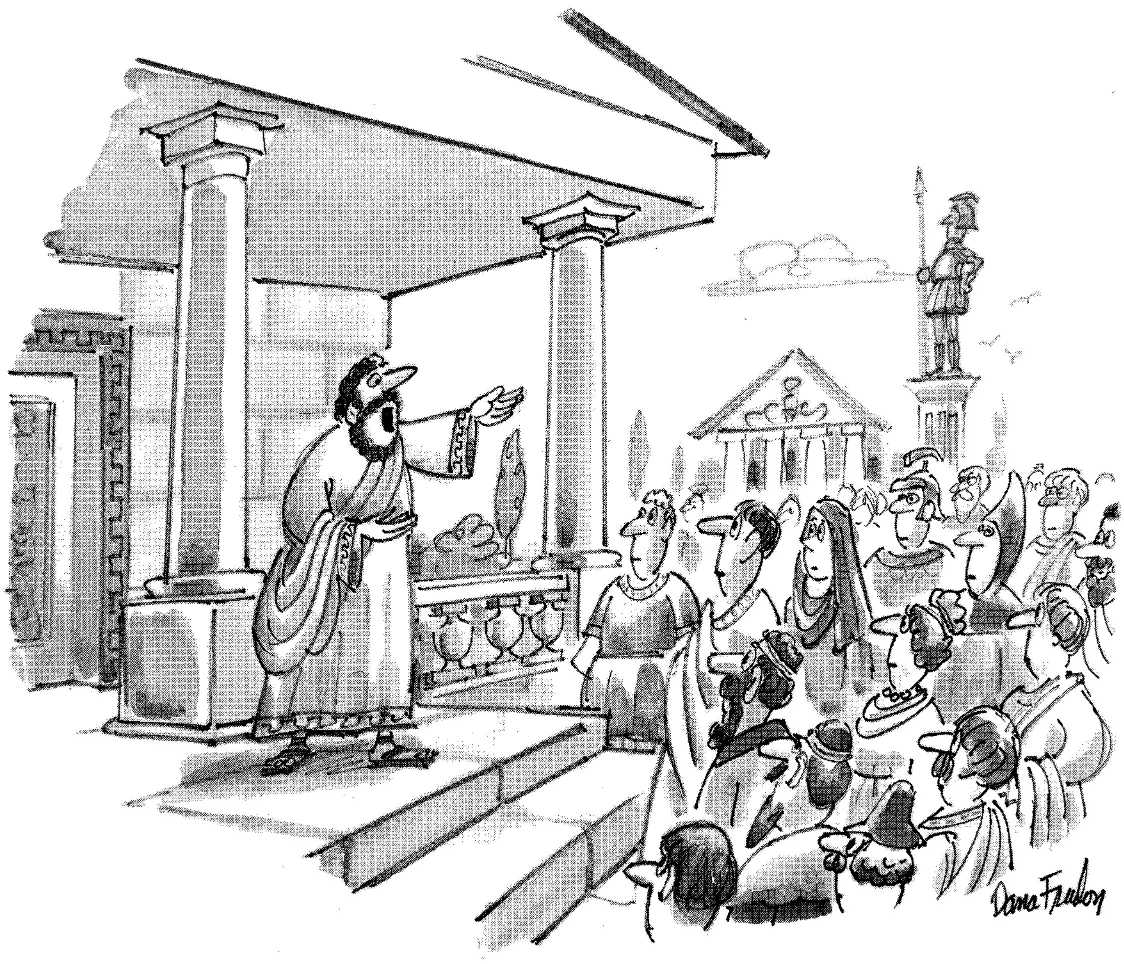

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• •

piece.' But I said no. Things were so impossible there. And then, a little later, I just changed my mind. I didn't even ring him—just turned up at his apartment. And he opened his arms to me. He never, ever bears grudges."

But the show couldn't run forever. Frustrated by the company's demands on his time, and following a series of acrimonious and well-publicized disagreements with Pierre Bergé, Nureyev stepped down as artistic director in late 1989, and accepted the less binding title of first choreographer.

The company he left behind him was far more sophisticated and cosmopolitan than the one he had found. He had given it several important productions, and, perhaps more important, he had remade its technical base, replacing a winsome but corrupted classicism with the purer structures of Agrippina Vaganova, the greatest of the Kirov teachers. It is in the elegant restraint of those dancers who watched and listened—Laurent Hilaire, Charles Jude—that his legacy is most apparent. "But then they didn't seem to want him to dance anymore," Tessa Kennedy says, "and he'd go anywhere he could dance."

Over the years, there has been little to tempt Nureyev away from the ballet stage. There were a couple of cautious forays into film. "Let's be honest," he said in 1977, at the time of the first. "Everyone wants to be a movie star. It's time to do it before I get wrinkles and they have to photograph me through a mattress." But neither of his films—Ken Russell's "Valentino" and James Toback's "Exposed"—was a success, and Nureyev became discouraged. He neither enjoyed the filmmaking process, nor wished to invite comparison with Mikhail Baryshnikov, who had been much praised for his acting in both "The Turning Point" and "White Nights." And other, offscreen offers proved resistible. There was an invitation to work with Tennessee Williams, which Nureyev considered but finally refused, and an informal reading of "The Idiot" for the producer Joseph Papp. "I was not prepared," Nureyev said afterward. "It was a mess. To be forgotten."

He had always been attracted by musical comedy, however, and in August of 1989, while he was still artistic director of the Paris Opéra Ballet (and to the considerable bemusement of Pierre Bergé), he signed a contract to play the King in a North American tour of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "The King and I." "I was always game to try something new, something different," he said at the time. "Now I'm into musicals. It's always like sticking—how you say it?—poker in fire. I always manage to irritate someone."

Nureyev approached rehearsals for "The King and I" with due trepidation, but Arthur Storch, the show's director, soon restored his confidence. Donald Pippin, the musical director, gave him scales to sing and, as Nureyev put it, "redirected the croaking." By the time Tessa Kennedy joined him in San Francisco, for the last leg of the tour, Nureyev was enjoying himself. "He didn't take it all too seriously," she says. "Not like his ballet performances. I remember we were on our way to the theatre and we stopped in an antique shop. There were all these furs there, and we dressed up as Mongolian princes. After a bit, I looked at my watch and said, 'Rudolf, the curtain goes up at eight.' 'Ooof,' he said, and laughed. 'Don't worry.' "

Taking his lead from Rex Harrison in "My Fair Lady," Nureyev simply talked his way through the singing. Inevitably, his body language proved more eloquently royal.

In November, 1989, during a break from the tour, Nureyev revisited St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) and, for the first time since his defection twenty-eight years before, danced with the Kirov Ballet. Watched by the hundred-year-old Ana Udaltsova, his first teacher, he partnered the ballerina Zhanna Ayupova in “La Sylphide.” The evening was not a success. Nureyev was tired and was carrying a number of chronic injuries. “I don’t know why I did it,” he told me shortly afterward. “It’s probably a very childish thing . . . but I’m of the school of Margot Fonteyn, who could never cancel a performance. If you could stand, you could dance.”

“The King and I” closed a short time later, but by the spring of 1990 Nureyev was touring the United States again, this time with a low-budget program of ballet divertissements entitled “Nureyev and Friends.” The tour was arranged by Andrew Grossman of Columbia Artists Management, whose lugubrious appearance and unvaryingly black clothing led Nureyev’s entourage to rename him the Undertaker. When “Nureyev and Friends” was promoted as his farewell, Nureyev was wearily angry, particularly since, as he told me, he had already agreed to repeat the venture the next year. Leading the Friends, on this occasion, was Charles Jude, the dancer who, more than any other, resembles Nureyev as he once was. (“After you,” Nureyev once told Margot Fonteyn, “he’s my favorite partner.”) There was more pathos than spectacle, however, in the fifty-two-year-old Nureyev’s effortful duplication of thirty-six-year-old Jude’s steps, in the painful references to the technique that could once be summoned without a thought. His performance attracted increasingly hostile reviews. He shrugged them off. “In my life now, there are two alternatives,” he told me. “Do nothing, and age in bitterness. Or dance. Keep in good health, physically and spiritually. And feel useful. Adequate. And I *can* do it.”

Like Fonteyn, Nureyev felt truly alive, truly himself, only onstage. The furies that drove him could be appeased only by performance. And as the subjects of his ballets grew increasingly dark—betrayal, murder, despair—his appearances took on a morbidly defiant quality. Criticism was ignored. To those who asked, he replied that as long as they paid him he would dance. “There was a level of objectivity,” Jane Hermann says. “He was faced with the knowledge that his career had to take some significant turns. It was very difficult.”

If the American tour of “Nureyev and Friends” was difficult, the British tour that followed it, in the spring of 1991, was all but unsustainable. This time the promoter was Jeffrey Kruger, of Hove (a suburb of Brighton). Nureyev joined a “roster of superstars in the pop field,” including Bill Haley and the Comets, Pat Boone, and Barry White. Supported by the dancers Evelyne Desutter and Vivi Flindt, and by a troupe of minor Soviet artists, few of whom he could name, Nureyev found himself dispatched around the B-list commercial circuit. Night after night, massaged and bandaged, he performed Flemming Flindt’s “The Lesson” and José Limón’s “The Moor’s Pavane” (both ballets ending in strangulations), on bare stages, to pre-recorded music.

Eventually, this bleak caravan found its way to London.

“It was tragic,” Tessa Kennedy says. “Horrible. I went to the Wembley Conference Centre, and there were these rows of nasty chairs covered in hideous material, and fluorescent strip lighting. The audiences were often ghastly, too. The whole thing was an uncharacteristic relaxing of control on Rudolf’s part.”

Jann Parry, of the *Observer*, who attended the performance but could not bring herself to review it, says, “Frankly, it’s a mystery to me why he put himself through the whole thing.”

What was most bewildering to those who knew him well was Nureyev’s apparent indifference to the non-technical aspects of his dancing. For it had always been in these details rather than in virtuoso steps that his performances had defined themselves. Nureyev’s elevation, in his prime, was pantherine enough, but it was never his elevation that compelled attention. It was his passion, which revealed itself in the spaces between movements—in devouring gazes and frozen stillnesses and dark silent runs across the stage. Nureyev knew instinctively that gesture, to be believable, must be born of emotional truth, and this understanding, more than any superiority of technique, served to point up the mannered redundancy of his seniors. His performances, synthesized, as they were, from exhaustion, fury, and desire, were dangerous,

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and looked it. They were also narcissistic, insolent, and unmistakably sexual in tone. Violette Verdy once compared Nureyev to "a great Moslem whore," commanding and controlling the appetites of the audience from the stage.

By the time of the cynically promoted "farewell tours," however, this dramatic commitment appeared to have evaporated. Unsuitable bravura steps had found their way into his character roles—double tours en l'air to both right and left, for example, were a disconcerting feature of his performance of Flindt's "The Overcoat" at the Edinburgh Festival—and all attempts at credible characterization had been abandoned.

There has been endless conjecture as to why Nureyev continued to dance, continued to pay such a price in forfeited dignity. Financial need has been suggested. But Nureyev, although he can be as inexplicably grasping as he can be generous, does not want for money. His productions—and more often than not, somewhere in the world, a Nureyev production is being performed—bring him plenty. He owns several properties in both Europe and the United States, and even allowing for a broad vein of personal unworldliness he cannot be said to lack for advisers.

Fear is closer to the mark—fear of relinquishing that part of himself which set him off from the rest, and for which he fought so long and hard.

"I was always an odd child, even in Ufa," he told me during his last American tour. "Things were taken from me, rather than given to me. So the moment I had a chance . . . I didn't ever let it go. Not at six, or seven, or eight, or ten, or twelve, or seventeen, or twenty, or thirty-five, or forty, or fifty, fifty-one, fifty-two, fifty-three . . . I'll never let it go."

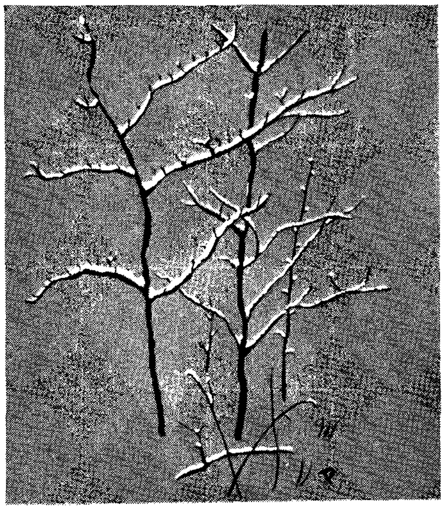
Callas could never let it go. Pavlova, long after the beauty was past, was dancing 'The Dragonfly' at the end of the pier. "It's not that some people are more important than others," Nureyev explained, "but there are those who bring something to this life which others can only observe, they cannot do. Me? God gave it to me because I was lucky. And I never let it go."

At the end, though, Nureyev was dancing for no one but himself. His performances had become elaborate rituals of pain, private defiances of age and time, at which audiences and fellow-performers were only incidentally present.

IT was Herbert von Karajan who first suggested that Nureyev turn his hand to conducting. The two found themselves face to face in a corridor in the Palais Garnier in 1980, and Nureyev complimented the conductor on his youthful appearance. "Well, young man," said von Karajan, indicating the musical scores he was carrying, "this is what's responsible. And I've no doubt that one day you'll come to it, too." As it happened, it was a possibility that Nureyev had not failed to consider. Beyond ballet, conducting appeared to offer the perfect marriage of his musical abilities and his continuing need for performance. By 1988, encouraged by Leonard Bernstein, he was thinking seriously of attending the conductors' course at the Juilliard School.

This idea was shelved, but Nureyev quietly began to apply himself to the study of music. He bought a harpsichord—a Ruckers, one of only three like it in the world. During the tour of "The King and I," he insisted that he be provided with a piano both backstage and in his hotel suite. There, between performances and late into the night, he would work his way through the ordered structures of "Das wohltemperirte Clavier." The music of Bach, Nureyev wryly explained, suffered even the slowest playing.

In February, 1991, Dame Margot Fonteyn died, of cancer. Nureyev had been in constant touch with her by phone and had visited her in Panama a month earlier. "She was suffering a lot," he said. "So, in a way, it was good for her, I think. It was a release." To mourn her, he flew to the Caribbean island of St. Barthélemy, where he had a beach house, and there he played Bach and gazed out at the sea. Of the four people he had ever truly loved—Nigel and Maude Gosling, Erik Bruhn, and Margot Fonteyn—only Maude remained. "There's fewer and fewer friends," he said, "and so you just wait till you drop off the tree. Meanwhile, you enjoy life to the full, deny nothing."



Finally determined to take what he described as his third walk to Golgotha (the first having been dancing and the second choreography), Nureyev got in touch with an old friend, Professor Wilhelm Hübner, at the Vienna Academy of Music. Several years earlier, Hübner, during his decade-long presidency of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, had helped Nureyev secure Austrian citizenship. He now accepted him as a pupil, and, after an initial period of instruction, referred him to Dr. Franz Moser, the director of the Vienna Residenz Orchestra.

The speed and instinct with which Nureyev grafted conducting technique to his musicality amazed his teachers, and echoed his introduction to classical ballet, thirty-five years earlier. Once again, he was a late starter; once again, his unyielding application was making the impossible possible. He began intensive rehearsals with the orchestra, and on the twenty-fifth of June, three months after his first conducting lesson, he conducted an evening of Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, Haydn, and Mozart at the Palais Auersperg. "It was a joy to watch him," Moser says. "He conducted with so much personality on stage, so much enthusiasm. Everyone was very impressed, including the musicians, who are not so easily impressed."

The next month, Nureyev took the podium at concerts in Ravello and Athens. He returned to Vienna for a further period of rehearsal, and in September, at the Vienna Concert House, and to favorable comment from the distinguished critic Franz Endler, of *Kurier*, an Austrian journal, conducted Prokofiev's "Classical" Symphony, Haydn's "La Chasse," and Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony. Finally, it seemed, the demons of the dance had been pacified. "He was happy," Moser says. "He was really happy."

In late September of 1991, Nureyev

travelled to Budapest to conduct at the Opera House, and there he fell ill. Despite his physical abilities, Nureyev has always been prone to illness, a vulnerability exacerbated by the unrelenting schedules he has always imposed on himself. During the late nineteen-seventies, he was treated for kidney stones, a recurrent condition, and fifteen years ago, while mounting "Romeo and Juliet" for the London Festival Ballet, he developed pneumonia and danced his first performances in a rain of sweat. Nureyev's respiratory system has always been weak—a legacy, perhaps, of the poverty in which he grew up. That his father died of pneumonia is a fact which has always haunted him.

At the beginning of October, fearful but uncomplaining ("His bravery is fantastic," says Rudi van Dantzig), Nureyev was flown from Budapest to Vienna, where, in response to his kidney condition, surgeons inserted a catheter. The next month marked his last tour as a dancer, in Australia. Unsurprisingly, it was not a critical success, and by New Year's Eve he was once again conducting at the Palais Auersperg. A few days later, he left Vienna for St. Bart's, and in February, 1992—invigorated, as always, by heat, sunshine, and the sea—he flew to Berlin. There, with the assistance of Patricia Ruanne of the Paris Opéra, he staged "The Sleeping Beauty" at the Deutsche Oper. On the opening night, at the request of the company, he danced the role of the evil fairy, Carabosse. "I hope I haven't displaced the plumbing," he said, laughing with the dancers afterward. He was referring to his recent surgery.

From Berlin, Nureyev flew to Budapest, and there, in the role of an angel in Gábor Keveházi's "Cristoforo," he danced for the last time.

IN March, Nureyev departed for Russia, with Douce François. He had been studying with the Muscovite conductor Vladimir Vais, and Vais had arranged for him to work with orchestras in Kazan, Yalta, and St. Petersburg. He spent three weeks in Kazan—which is two hundred and fifty miles west of Ufa, Nureyev's childhood home—working with the Tatar musicians by day, carousing with them by night. He enjoyed himself immensely. "He was with his own people," François says. Toward the

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end of their stay, Nureyev and François went to a sauna with the musicians and then out into the extreme cold. The next day, Nureyev was running a high fever. At first, he thought that he had pneumonia. "He was in despair," François recalls. " 'Like my father,' he kept saying. 'Like my father.' And when he's afraid like that he's hard to calm."

He was taken to the Kirov Military Medical Academy, in St. Petersburg, and for more than a week he was treated for pneumonia. His condition failed to respond, however, and both doctors and patient became suspicious of the diagnosis. Finally, at François's insistence, Nureyev was flown to Paris. There it was discovered that he had pericarditis. He was operated on, and fluid was drained from around his heart.

Considerably depleted by both the illness and the surgery, Nureyev started work on "La Bayadère" with his designer, Ezio Frigerio. Ninel Kurgapkina, who in 1958 had danced Gamzatti in the ballet to Nureyev's Solor, arrived from St. Petersburg to assist with the staging, and moved in with Douce François at the Parc Monceau. By the end of April, Nureyev was wielding a baton once again—this time at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, where Jane Hermann had invited him to conduct "Romeo and Juliet" for American Ballet Theatre's spring gala. Sensible of the importance of the occasion, he rehearsed hard, winning the admiration both of the orchestra and of its principal conductor, Charles Barker. "He was respectfully concerned beforehand," Hermann recalls. "He prepared for two weeks. He knew damn well you don't play around with these things."

The night of the sixth of May saw the ballet establishment out in glittering force. Irina Kolpakova, Nureyev's first Giselle, was in the audience, and so was Alessandra Ferri, his last. Maude Gosling had flown over from London. Dancing the principal roles were Sylvie Guillem and Laurent Hilaire, both of the Paris Opéra, and both Nureyev protégés. "The evening had many layers of sentiment and appropriateness," Hermann says.

Clive Barnes praised the performance, but other critics commented that Nureyev's tempi were too slow. For Charles Barker, the tempi were not the point. "What matters is that he not only had the internal fortitude, the confidence, and the will, he had the guts to do it. What none of the critics picked up on is that he *did* it."

At the end of May, Nureyev returned to the Palais Auersperg to conduct a program of Rossini and Mozart arias sung by Jochen Kowalski. It was one of his bad days. "He was in great pain," Franz Moser recalls. "He could move only his fingers, not his arms. Nevertheless, he insisted, absolutely insisted, on performing. Everyone saw that he was really ill. His skin was white; in his face, only his eyes moved."

Nureyev's last concert took place in San Francisco, in July. He conducted an orchestra of university students and teachers in a performance of "Romeo and Juliet." "He looked tired," says the former Royal Ballet principal dancer Wayne Eagling, who was there. "He wasn't as animated as I thought he'd be. He still went out with us to a restaurant and after that to a club, but I could see that for him to get up and move around was painful." Eagling, who since last year has been the director of the Dutch National Ballet, invited Nureyev to conduct "Petrouchka" on New Year's Day, 1993. "With two years of hard work, he would have been a *really good* conductor," Moser says. "He loved it."

A WEEK after the opening night of "La Bayadère," Nureyev—together with Charles Jude, his wife, and a large dog—fled Paris for St. Barthélemy and the sun. They were pursued to the Caribbean by reporters from the British tabloid presses, which, despite denials from Douce François and others, were running stories maintaining that Nureyev had AIDS. For ten days, the party stayed at Nureyev's small wooden beach house, on the island's stormier, and hence less fashionable, coast. ("Warm, wonderful, violent *dashing* waves": so the coastline is described by John Taras, a recent guest of Mikhail Baryshnikov, who also owns a house on St. Bart's.) Finally, and regretfully, Nureyev's friends returned him to Paris, the doctors, and the winter. There he has his good days and his bad days, and his friends take turns attending to him. Many tests have to be done, so he is frequently driven to a hospital. With him on these occasions he takes the score of "Coppélia." ♦

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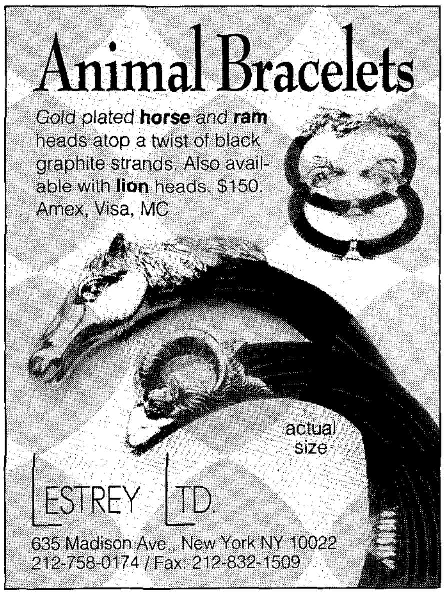

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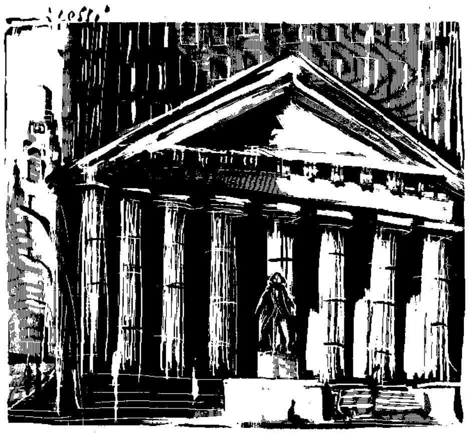
AROUND CITY HALL

HIGH WINDS IN BROOKLYN

by Andy Logan

OF course, the eighties—glitzy, heedless, fabulous-dealmaking, or prudent, God-and-tradition-revering, according to one's social philosophy or party registration—didn't end the moment the third number in the name of the year shifted from an eight to a nine. It is probable that many future historians will associate the end of the eighties with last month's election of a Democratic President, whose urgent calls for change during the campaign resulted in the cancellation of the twelve-year Reagan-Bush lease on the Oval Office. In this city, the election was followed by no predictions of political upheaval. No matter which party is in charge of the executive branch in Washington, New York has been—with few lapses—a Democratic town. Only three men have been elected its mayor on the Republican line in this century, the most recent being John Lindsay, in 1965. It may have been years of frustration with New York politics which encouraged the G.O.P. view that Democrats are a truly alien crew, and caused the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Rich Bond, who until recently was a resident of this state, to say at the start of last summer's G.O.P. Convention, in Houston, "We are America. These other people are not America."



Besides the Washington cast changes, New Yorkers had another reminder that an era was over. For the last decade, front pages here (and not only those of the tabloids), supplemented by the television evening news, dwelt so routinely on such local celebrities as George Steinbrenner, John Gotti, Mike Tyson, Donald Trump, Bess Myerson, Imelda Marcos, John Cardinal O'Connor, Ivan Boesky, and the Reverend Al Sharpton that an unwary visitor glancing at the headlines could get the impression that hardly more than a handful of people lived in the nation's largest city. The preoccupation with these superheadliners was not only local: their names were in large type all over the country and sometimes the world. There's little question, for example, that the face of the Reverend Al is more easily identifiable in Dublin, say, than that of David Dinkins, the first black mayor of this city. Some people would argue that so much newsprint devoted to New York celebrities is not inappropriate considering all the space given to the latest on the Grimaldis, sometimes referred to in reports as the royal family of Monaco—a principality that, as the reports do not mention, is half the size of Central Park.

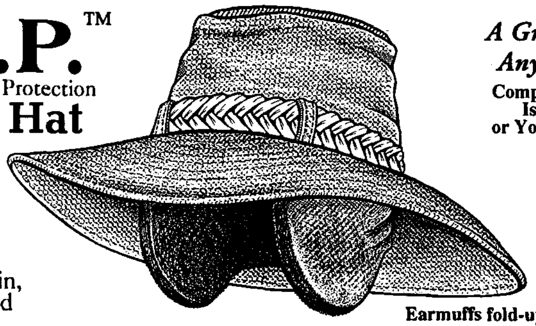
The latest on the Grimaldis continues to get the big-headline treatment, but anyone who looked at the front pages in recent months would have noticed at once that most of the eighties superheadliners had had their places taken by nineties news stars: Woody and Mia, of course; Amy Fisher; and Sol Wachtler, the formerly highly respected chief judge of the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, who is now under a form of house arrest and charged with committing crimes in the course of a secret life so sordid that one of his stunned former colleagues said he would have found more credible the revelation that Mother Teresa was a serial killer. In a demonstration of New York upward—and downward—mobility, after Dinkins mentioned that he had known and admired the Judge for forty years, it turned out that his mother had been a maid in the household of Wachtler and his wife when they were newlyweds. George Steinbrenner, of course, will be back next spring, in day-to-day control of the New York Yankees, from which he was banished by Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent, another headliner now banished from the scene. Some local residents will be curious to see how Steinbrenner, when he formally returns, will adapt to having lost the baseball industry's egregious-loudmouth title to the Cincinnati Reds' owner, Marge Schott, of whom Jay Leno said that, although she might lose her baseball team, "the good news is she may get to speak at the next Republican Convention." Imelda Marcos is absent for another reason, having left town to run (unsuccessfully) for President of the Philippines. In one of the more memorable judicial scenes in this city in recent years, Mme. Marcos, wearing what appeared to be a jewelled nightgown, stood on Centre Street a few blocks north of City Hall, in front of the federal courthouse—where Bess Myerson was then being tried, under an indictment brought, like Marcos's, by Rudolph Giuliani, then United States Attorney. (Both Imelda and Bess, as they were known to the headlines, were eventually acquitted on all counts.) After nearly every session of the three-month Marcos trial, *Newsday*, in what may have been an excess of creative journalism, honored the defendant's famous weakness for shoes, by printing a picture of her feet in the day's choice of footwear.

An unexpected number of the former superheadliners are out of town, because they are serving time in other parts of the country: Gotti in Marion, Illinois; Leona Helmsley in Danbury, Connecticut; Tyson in Indiana. Celebrity, apparently, does not pay. Mike Tyson's loss of the heavyweight championship in Tokyo in February, 1990—not to mention his subsequent troubles—was taken hard in his native Brooklyn, so there was much rejoicing when, on November 13th, in Las Vegas, Riddick Bowe, who also grew up in Brooklyn, a few blocks from Tyson's home, won the belt. He came to City Hall on November 23rd, to receive the key to the city from Mayor Dinkins, and went from there to Brooklyn's Borough Hall and then to his old school, Thomas Jefferson High, where, last February, two students were fatally shot by another student on the morning the Mayor was due to make a speech there on the possibilities for self-improvement, even in one of the toughest areas in Brooklyn. The new champion won't be around to help improve conditions at his old school, however, since, like many local residents who could afford to leave the city's crack-ridden blocks, he moved out of the neighborhood a couple of years ago. He and his family now live in suburban Maryland.

Not all the eighties superheadliners have left town or vanished from the news; the Reverend Al Sharpton, for example, has lately been making headlines that startle longtime Sharpton watchers, who remember him from the days when his marches into racially troubled neighborhoods caused some white residents to describe him as a racial racketeer. In the Democratic primary for the United States Senate, in September, he came in third in a field of four, ahead of City Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman. Buoyed by this outcome, he has said that in next year's municipal election he might run for president of the City Council. Early this month, however, perhaps for old times' sake, he threatened to lead a protest march through the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. For most of the past two months, leaders of the Lubavitcher Hasidic sect there have issued almost daily denunciations of Mayor Dinkins for being, as they see it, heavily biased in favor of, and unwilling to offend, his fellow African-Americans ("THE MAYOR IS AFRAID OF THE BLACKS" was a front-page headline in the conservative *Jewish Press*), followed by Dinkins' denunciations of those who made such charges, which were then taken by some Jews as further proof of his anti-Semitic bias.

Some of the eighties celebrities, such as Donald Trump, continue to make the kind of tabloid headlines that are followed by exclamation points ("IVANA!" "MARLA!") either because of what is apparently editorial inertia or because of the positions they hold—Cardinal O'Connor, for example, as well as the Mayor and Governor Mario Cuomo. (Many observers consider O'Connor the wiliest politician of the three.) The Governor, of course, has recently made nothing like the news that he made in the heady times a year ago when he almost ran for President. Hillary Clinton told interviewers before the November election that she had thought of the Presidential campaign as merely a rehearsal for some future race for the White House until Cuomo announced, on December 20, 1991, that he would not be a candidate for the Democratic nomination. The campaigns of most of the declared candidates were partly on hold, and their fund-raising was crippled, while a large share of the national political attention focussed on the waiting-for-Mario game and swarms of reporters hung around Albany looking for smoke signals as Cuomo conducted his public soul-searching. The campaigns of the other contenders didn't move full speed ahead until after the thumbs-down announcement, which came as a chartered plane waited on the tarmac at the Albany airport to carry Cuomo to New Hampshire in time to make the deadline for entering that state's crucial Presidential primary. Cuomo likes Albany, which is fortunate, since that is where he apparently will be for a while. He even likes the rather creaky mid-Victorian Governor's Mansion, of which not all his predecessors were fond, and he sometimes mentions how grand it is compared with the Queens apartment where he was born, above the grocery store run by his Italian-immigrant parents as they struggled to make it in the perilous New World. (A favorite line in his speeches in his first campaign for governor, in 1982, was "We are the sons and daughters of giants!") Cuomo's aborted foray into the Presidential race did have a consequence gratifying to those who frequently complain that Presidential campaigns run unconscionably long. Because of Cuomo, the 1992 Presidential campaign was fully under way for only ten and a half months. Even so, it seemed interminable.

MANY Americans in other parts of the country have been preoccupied lately with such questions as whether Operation Restore Hope will save the people of Somalia, what the new Presidential Administration will look like (who would have thought, a year



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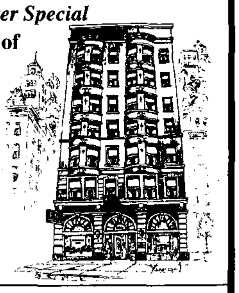

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ago, that "Live from Little Rock" would be the newscasters' nightly tag line?), whether a local plant must close, and whether a favorite team will be eliminated from the playoffs. In this city, however, one could get the impression from reading the front pages of the last two months that people here were almost entirely concerned with a past event: what exactly happened (and who should get the blame for it) on August 19, 1991?

To the rest of the world, the date is that of the coup that marked the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union. In this city, probably forever, it stands for the night when Gavin Cato, a seven-year-old black boy, was accidentally killed in Crown Heights by a car in the entourage of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whom his followers believe may be the Messiah; less than three hours later, a twenty-nine-year-old Hasidic student from Australia, Yankel Rosenbaum, was set upon, in retaliation, by a gang of about twenty blacks, most of them from outside Crown Heights, and received stab wounds that led to his death that night. Four nights of rioting followed.

The uproar over these events could have given many out-of-towners the impression that the whole city was being overrun by roving bands of violent black youths. In fact, Crown Heights, with a population that is ten per cent Hasidim and nearly ninety per cent black, is an enclave in north-central Brooklyn which the majority of New Yorkers have probably never gone near. There were no more deaths after those on the night of August 19th, and the situation hardly qualified as a pogrom, as Dinkins' opponents in the upcoming mayoral election routinely claim. The Hasidim and other Jews here often refer to widespread destruction of Jewish businesses in the 1991 rioting, but of the seven that were damaged one was owned by Arabs, three by Koreans, and three by Jews; one in the last category, an H & R Block office, was listed by some as a Jewish target, although the rioters had no way of knowing that it was a Jewish-held franchise. The riot's most celebrated victim, Jimmy Breslin, who was stripped of most of his clothes and all of his money, pointed out that he is hardly Jewish-looking; what his attackers (one of the accused was eleven) wanted was not Jewish money but money.

After a young black, Lemrick Nelson, Jr., was indicted for the stabbing, city and private agencies and some religious groups made an effort to bring young black and Jewish Crown Heights residents together. Though some progress at conciliation was reported, it was shattered when, late on the afternoon of October 29th, a jury made up of six blacks, four Hispanics, and two whites (neither of them Jewish—there had been Jews on the panel, but they found reasons not to serve) acquitted Nelson on all counts. Earlier that afternoon, a group of Hasidim and Orthodox Jews had marched over the Brooklyn Bridge to City Hall carrying signs that called Dinkins a murderer, because he hadn't brought in the police until the fourth night of the rioting. (In any event, it is unlikely that they could have arrived in force on the night of August 19th in time to prevent Rosenbaum's murder.) By then, the Mayor had issued a statement on the verdict, saying, "I have no reason to doubt that in this case the criminal-justice system has operated fairly and openly." This led some New Yorkers, including some of Dinkins' strong admirers, to mention the tones of outrage with which he had denounced the jury that brought in the verdict acquitting the attackers of Rodney King, and the jury in South Africa that convicted Winnie Mandela. Both King and Mrs. Mandela are, of course, black, confirming the belief of Dinkins' detractors that his view of justice varies according to the skin color of the victim. Avi Weiss, a Bronx rabbi who had tried to disrupt Dinkins' inauguration ceremony, in 1990, led a large delegation to Gracie Mansion carrying a coffin labelled Yankel Rosenbaum, and accused Dinkins of being responsible for Rosenbaum's death. Two Brooklyn members of the City Council got into a shouting match at City Hall over the Crown Heights situation: Mary Pinkett, the black Council member who represents Crown Heights, said that she would punch out Noach Dear, an Orthodox Jew, if he called her an anti-Semite. It seemed that each time Dinkins tried to explain himself to Jewish New Yorkers—who, before Crown Heights, had treated him as their most loyal friend among black politicians—he got called worse names. At one meeting, a Hasidic woman called him a "Jew hater," and another said he was "worse than Farrakhan," the well-known anti-Semite whose remarks on the subject Dinkins had denounced in 1985, angering some of his fellow-blacks and causing Farrakhan to suggest that Dinkins not be allowed to live. It was clear that not only Orthodox Jews and Hasidim had been offended by some of his recent actions; so now were what the press called "mainstream" Jews—in a city with more Jewish residents than any in the world. A mid-November banner headline in the *Post* was "TORN CITY." About the same time, a poll showed that forty-three per cent of those queried disapproved of his handling of the Crown Heights situation, while only thirty-one per cent approved—bad news indeed for a mayor running for reëlection.

WHILE the 1992 Presidential-election campaign ran shorter than Americans had become accustomed to, and shorter than it might have if Cuomo had been a more headlong sort, the current mayoral election in this city is another story. It's been under way, for most purposes, far longer than the 1989 race, although the only poll that counts—as politicians always put it if the numbers in their column are nothing to brag about—isn't until next November. On May 10, 1989, Rudolph Giuliani announced his candidacy for the Republican nomination for mayor. Four months earlier, he had resigned as United States Attorney, having served five and a half years. As a prosecutor he had been famous for being highly effective and also for going after highly visible defendants—that is, celebrities. He had brought indictments against not only Bess and Imelda but Ivan Boesky and other Wall Street people, and the top people in the local Mafia families. His record then—most of the acquittals or overturning of convictions by higher courts came later—was considered the flashiest of any United States Attorney in New York since Tom Dewey, who was the last New Yorker to be nominated for the Presidency. After Giuliani moved out of his office, reporters found an old newspaper there opened to a page that featured the headline "GIULIANI AND DEWEY—CAREERS COMPARED."

Dinkins, who was then the Manhattan borough president, had announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomi-

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nation in February, 1989. He had managed to get elected to the borough president's office only four years earlier, after a long and costly struggle, having been defeated in 1977 and again in 1981 by Andrew Stein, the son of the politically well-connected multimillionaire businessman and publisher Jerry Finkelstein. Stein's father had helped to raise the three hundred thousand dollars it took to elect him to the New York State Assembly in 1968, at the age of twenty-three. In the years since, Finkelstein either put up or helped raise about ten million dollars, which Stein has spent on four more successful campaigns for the Assembly, two for Manhattan borough president, and two for president of the City Council, and, in 1984, for an unsuccessful race for Congress. Dinkins, after each of his defeats by Stein, went back to his appointed job of city clerk, a Democratic clubhouse plum, and spent most of his days presiding over the marriage bureau in the Municipal Building. He might still be there if, in 1985, Stein had not decided to run for the somewhat more elevated post of president of the City Council. Although it is one of three jobs to which candidates are elected by citywide vote (the others are Mayor and Comptroller), the Council president has few responsibilities other than breaking a Council tie (there never is a tie) and becoming mayor if the incumbent dies.

Finally, in November, 1985, Dinkins, defeating an opponent less well-fixed than Stein, was elected Manhattan borough president. Giving up the hard-won post was a tough decision, as Dinkins has often said in the years since, but in February, 1989, after a poll showed that he had a chance to be elected the city's first black mayor, he declared his candidacy. (Stein had decided to stay out of this one.) It was after Giuliani's announcement in May that the race went full throttle. In Dinkins' defeat of the incumbent, Ed Koch, in the September primary, an event in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn played a large role and also influenced the general election: the fatal shooting that August of a young black man from Brownsville named Yusuf Hawkins by a band of Italian-American youths who had never seen him before but were offended by the presence of a black in their neighborhood. "It was as if any nigger would do," Dinkins said the next day. One of the complaints of some of the city's Jews about Dinkins' recent actions on Crown Heights was that the Mayor did not immediately seem to see that the stabbing of Yankel Rosenbaum had occurred for no other reason than that his beard and felt hat identified him to his black attackers as a Hasid, and did not say, with similar passion, "It was as if any Jew would do."

The killing of young Hawkins appeared to demonstrate how bad race relations were under the Koch regime (Dinkins' statement at the time, "The tone and climate of this city does get set at City Hall," has been flung back at him often in recent weeks), and the belief that Dinkins would be a force for greater racial harmony ("the healer," Cuomo called him) helped defeat Giuliani in the general election—although by the dangerously close margin of two per cent. Dinkins got 898,900 votes, to 856,450 for Giuliani. According to the exit polls, the coalition that put Dinkins over consisted of ninety-eight per cent of the black votes, seventy-three per cent of the Hispanic, thirty-one per cent of the Jewish (Dinkins' largest bloc of white votes, seventy-one per cent of which went to Giuliani), and an undetermined but undoubtedly large share of the votes of members of municipal unions.

Not one of the three presumptive candidates in the 1993 mayoral contest—Stein (who is aggressively not sitting this one out) and Giuliani and Dinkins (doing reruns)—has formally announced his candidacy, but all have said it should be obvious that they are in the race. On being asked a few weeks ago, after a City Hall event that required the Mayor to shake hands with a large number of community leaders, whether it didn't suggest that the 1993 race might be on his mind that day, Dinkins said, "What makes you think it isn't always on my mind?" The first large mayoral fund-raiser this year was a Stein affair, which took place last January at the Waldorf. Stein—travelling first class, as usual—had brought on, to entertain his guests, Frank Sinatra, Shirley MacLaine, and Liza Minnelli, who sang "New York, New York." The take was two and a quarter million dollars. In the months since, the three candidates have been moving about the city, working crowds and informally raising cash. In an eight-day period that ended on December 7th, Stein, Giuliani, and Dinkins all held fund-raisers here. A *Times* headline noted the dominant concern during this festival of arm-twisting: "CROWN HTS. DRIVES MAYORAL CONTEST AS 3 TRY TO HARNESS RAGE."

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At the Dinkins fund-raiser in the Imperial Ballroom of the Sheraton New York on November 30th, at which he raised nearly two million dollars, the program included a laser-beam show featuring his achievements as mayor, accompanied by (piped in, this time) Liza Minnelli singing "New York, New York," and lengthy remarks by the master of ceremonies, Bill Cosby, who is the Mayor's good friend and sometime host at the Cosby place in the Berkshires. A few days earlier, the Dinkins people had said there was a good chance that President-elect Clinton would be there, but he did not make it. However, Ron Brown, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, was on hand. Brown, who grew up in Harlem and whose father was a friend of the Mayor's, predicted "a great victory" for Dinkins next November. "I am here because I love New York and I love David Dinkins," Brown said, and his affection for both may turn out to be highly beneficial if he is confirmed as Clinton's Secretary of Commerce. Guests at the fund-raiser who had planned to put Crown Heights out of their minds for the evening found it hard to do so. On the Seventh Avenue sidewalk outside the hotel, more than a hundred demonstrators had gathered at the start of the dinner, most of them, with their long black coats, corkscrew sideburns, and felt hats, identifiable as Hasidim. Led by State Assemblyman Dov Hikind, an Orthodox Jew, they waved hand-lettered signs with such messages as "Justice for Crown Heights" and "Crown Heights Lynching—

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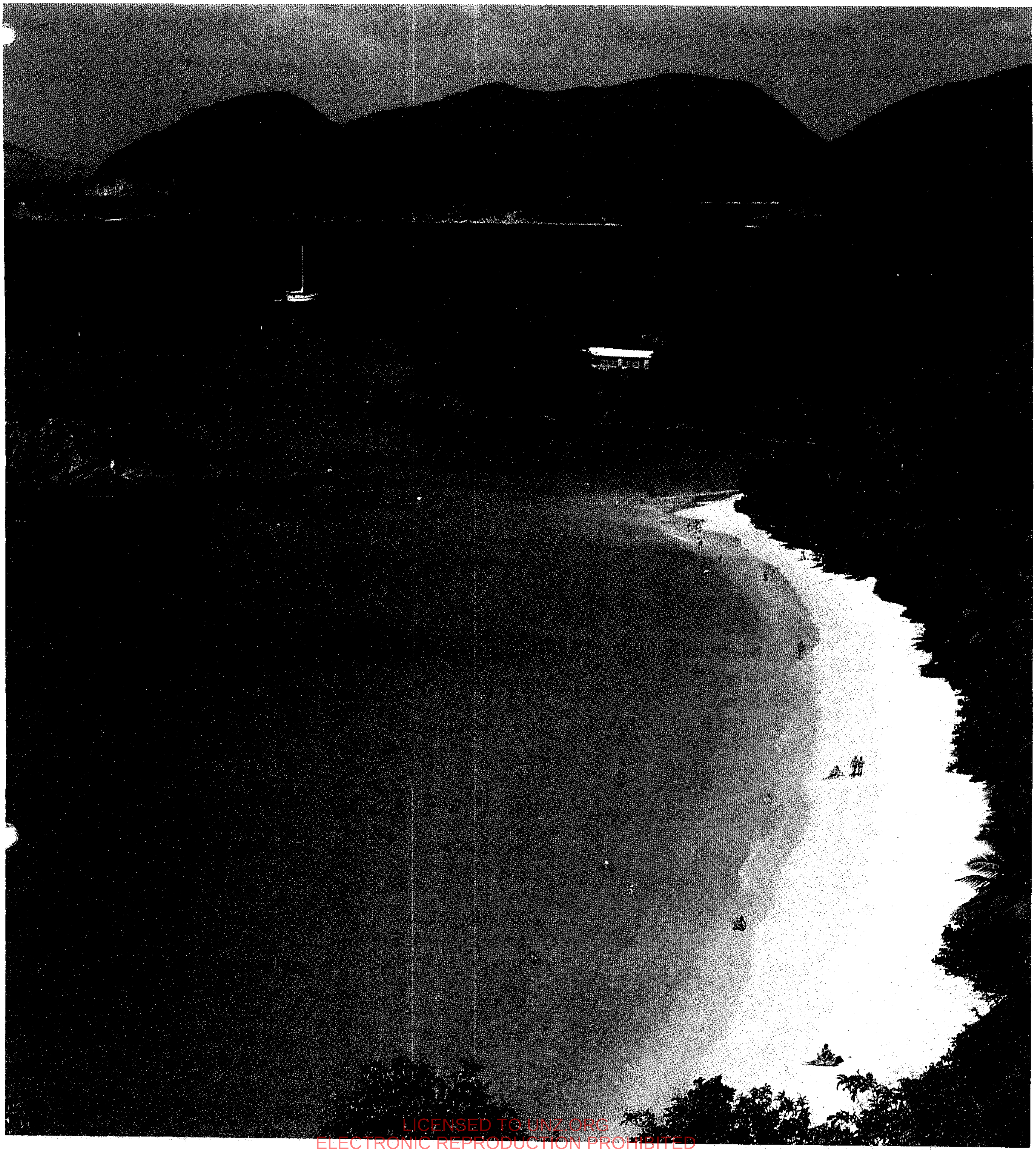
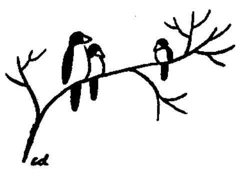


Dinkins Where Were You?" Mocking the Mayor's favorite description of New York as a "gorgeous mosaic," one sign read "Roses are red Violets are bluish You're not part of the mosaic If you're Jewish." On the sidewalk, Hikind stood on a crate and shouted through a bullhorn. He told reporters that he planned to pull out the Jewish names from Dinkins' list of contributors and would then urge them to demand an independent investigation of the Mayor's handling of events in Crown Heights.

Three of the speakers at the Dinkins dinner dwelt on the Crown Heights crisis, including Jesse Jackson. Jackson, of course, has not been forgiven by some Jews for his 1984 description of New York as "Hymietown." (A few days later, he appeared with the Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, whom Dinkins, calling in the big guns, had appointed to try to bring about a reconciliation here between blacks and Jews.) Another of the speakers, Peggy Tishman, who is a prominent Jewish philanthropist, urged Dinkins' reëlection, on the ground that it offered the best hope of bringing the two groups together. Cosby, on his way in, had stopped to talk to some of the demonstrators on the sidewalk. In an indication that even Dinkins' strongest supporters had questions about his actions in the Crown Heights crisis, Cosby said, "There is something wrong that should, ought, and will be dealt with." Referring to the problems between the blacks and the Hasidim, he told the crowd at the fund-raiser, "What we need in New York is a good snowstorm," explaining that it would help resolve the Mayor's problem of not being able to bring people together: "That's the only time everyone says hello . . . muggers stop mugging in the subway . . . people are just nice when there is a disaster." However, according to one legend, a big snowstorm can be the opposite of a boon to a political career. In February, 1969, a mayoral reëlection year here, there was a huge snowstorm in the city. Queens residents, believing that Lindsay's Sanitation Department trucks were laggard in plowing their streets, denounced him in tones bordering on the violent. Ever since, the words "Queens" and "snow" have invariably caused someone in a crowd to link them with the name Lindsay and what is often described as his politically fatal gaffe. After the hurricane in Florida last August, there was speculation on "This Week with David Brinkley" over whether the sight of the President racing to the rescue would help in his uphill battle for reëlection. (It didn't.) Tom Wicker told the Brinkley listeners, "I remember, not too many years ago, when Mayor John Lindsay, as Mayor of New York City, was defeated by a snowstorm. The snowstorm, the remains of which were not cleared away very rapidly, was a major factor in his defeat." Pundits on national affairs are not always reliable on the unpredictable politics of this city. Far from being defeated in November of 1969, Lindsay pulled off the remarkable trick of being reëlected (running on the Liberal Party ticket) without the support of either the Democratic or the Republican Party. He even carried the borough of Queens.



Mayor Dinkins, in trying to counter the charges that his handling of the Crown Heights situation had polarized the city, told his dinner guests, somewhat immodestly, "We've done more than any government in our city's history to increase the peace and increase communication between groups who have never spoken before." Referring to what he called his "fat-cat opponents," he said, "Our people's hearts and minds can never be purchased with bags of money or buckets of fear." Some of those in the room wondered later whether anyone who had just raised nearly one and a half million dollars in a single night was well positioned to denounce his rivals for possessing bags of money. One salutation to the crowd from the Mayor must have surprised any of the guests who remembered that a couple of years back, after Ellis Island was refurbished, he had said to a reporter, while marching in the annual African-American Day parade, "They wanted me to go to Ellis Island for the opening-day ceremonies . . . but I said, 'I don't want any part of that! Ellis Island is for the people who came over in ships! My people came over in chains.' I don't want any part of those people from the ships today." Last month, Raymond B. Harding, the head of the Liberal Party, posed a question. Despite his name, Harding is of Croatian-Jewish descent and was brought here as a child—by ship—to escape the Nazis. In a letter that, as Liberal Party leader, he sent out last month, he quoted the Mayor's remark about people who came in ships, and asked of the man advertised as the healer, "Who among us is the Mayor referring to when he asserts he wants no part of those people?" Possibly some of Dinkins' campaign staff had looked at the demographics of the 1989 mayoral race, which Giuliani had come so close to winning, and noted that the Republican had won sixty-five per cent of the white Protestant vote, eighty-four per cent of the white Catholic vote, and, long before Dinkins' troubles over Crown Heights, sixty-nine per cent of the Jewish vote. Moreover, it seemed clear that the support of some of the elements of the Mayor's 1989 winning coalition can no longer be entirely relied on: he is on poor terms with some prominent Hispanics, and the leaders of the largest of the municipal unions did not show up at his dinner. Having apparently thought matters over, the Mayor, during his speech, hailed the crowd at the Sheraton as "the sons and daughters of immigrants."

Harding attended both Giuliani's fund-raiser, on December 2nd, and Stein's, five days later, saying that he hadn't decided which of the two would receive the Liberal Party designation; in 1989, it went to Giuliani. Both Stein and Giuliani have been sharply critical of Dinkins' record in Crown Heights. In case their guests had any doubts about their position on the matter, a fellow-critic, Assemblyman Hikind, was invited to both events (at the Giuliani affair, he sat on the dais), and Rabbi Sheah Hecht, a Lubavitcher from Crown Heights who has had harsh things to say about the Mayor, delivered a benediction at both parties. Giuliani's fund-raiser, like the Mayor's, was held in the Sheraton's Imperial Ballroom. Standing below three huge screens that featured a single message—"Rudy!"—Giuliani called for change.

Stein's dinner, held in the truly imperial Rainbow Room, also called for change. The announced entertainment there was by Joan Rivers, who stayed only a few minutes, during which she criticized Hillary Clinton's eyebrows. The food—duck pâté, smoked trout, poached salmon—was so tasty that most of the guests were too preoccupied with it to listen to the program. It consisted of five local citizens (two Hispanics, two Asians, and the mother of Jennifer Levin, the victim in the so-called preppy-murder case) explaining how helpful Stein had been to them, usually when no one else, including the Mayor—especially the Mayor—had lifted a finger. The café singer Andrea Marcovicci could barely be heard over the noshing as she sang new words to "New York, New York" ("Don't make me hear that song again, New York, New York"). City Councilman Adam Clayton Powell IV, who is the son of the city's first black member of Congress and is a somewhat gorgeous mosaic himself (his mother is Puerto Rican, and he is a member of the Council's Latino caucus), said in introducing Stein, "God knows, we need a change in this city." He said later that that didn't mean he was supporting Stein for mayor: he might vote for Dinkins. At Giuliani's dinner, in case anyone had forgotten how *his* forebears got to this country, a film was shown of a trip his family had recently taken to Ellis Island, during which they located some records of his grandfather's arrival there.

Stein later reported that he had raised a million dollars that night, bringing his total to approximately four million. Giuliani had raised close to a million—less than the Mayor, but enough to bring his total to two and a half million, or about the Mayor's take to date. Those were undoubtedly bags of money. Before the Giuliani event, the Republican consultant Roger Ailes supplied a small bucket of fear. If Giuliani should lose this time, he said, "this city is going to turn into Detroit"—a fate that might seem especially alarming, perhaps, to a "We are America" crowd. Another Republican consultant, Jay Severin, told the *News* later that the Mayor's promise to bring racial harmony made the race issue fair game. Invoking George Bush's "Read my lips" tax pledge, Severin said, "In 1989, Dinkins said 'I will bring us together.' He didn't."

Cosby's call for a big snowstorm that would provide a miraculous resolution of the city's racial problems, making people stop mugging each other and be nice, was answered on December 11th, when a huge, destructive storm hit the Northeast. Although there was little snow here, terrifying winds and wind-and-tide-driven waves swept away or severely damaged thousands of houses. For a couple of days, the Mayor moved about the city's five boroughs, trying to reassure the newly homeless, especially in the Sea Gate enclave of Brooklyn, where the losses were the most dramatic. It was not clear whether the storm would eventually be judged to have led to more niceness and fewer muggings, or whether it would be followed by the reëlection of a mayor the next November. Still, for a long weekend Dinkins didn't have to answer a single question about why he had failed to take certain actions on August 19, 1991, or on October 29, 1992.

The respite was brief. On Monday, December 14th, the *Post's* banner headline was "TARGET JEWS," and inside was an account of the stabbing, the day before, of a Hasidic rabbi (by a Hispanic) in front of his Lower East Side synagogue—one of three attacks on Jews that weekend. The next day, the *Post* headline was "CROWN HTS. VICTIM TALKS." Inside was an interview with Ralph Nimmons, a homeless black man who, according to a recent indictment, had been beaten by a group of Hasidim behind the Grand Rebbe's headquarters. In case there was an impression that Crown Heights was strictly of local interest, that same morning the Reverend Al Sharpton and Councilman Noach Dear appeared on "CBS This Morning," each offering other Americans his version of all that had gone wrong there. On December 16th, the Mayor travelled to Crown Heights to meet with Hasidim from all over Brooklyn—although not with the Grand Rebbe who may or may not be the Messiah—in an effort to reach a degree of reconciliation, or at least truce, in what some Lubavitchers have called his state of war with the Hasidic community. It wasn't quite going to Canossa, but it came close. Dinkins had already announced that in February he would be visiting Japan. He may have hoped the Japanese are so far away that they have never heard of Crown Heights, but he would be wise not to bet on it. ♦

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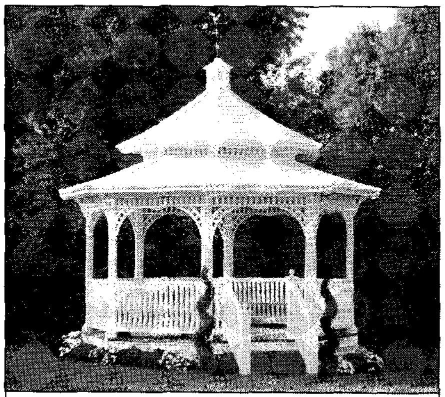

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A calcium-rich diet and exercise play an important part in preventing osteoporosis. Estraderm can help, too. Estraderm is a clear patch that delivers estradiol through your skin into the bloodstream, similar to the way your ovaries did before menopause. Sometimes the patch can cause skin irritation, although this happens less often when it's worn on the buttocks.

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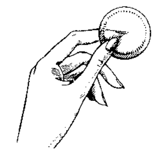
It's important to balance risks against proven benefits. Estraderm has been used safely by millions of women to relieve hot flashes, night sweats, and other menopausal symptoms. And a study at the Mayo Clinic has confirmed that Estraderm can halt bone loss and prevent postmenopausal osteoporosis. Of course, this doesn't mean that Estraderm is for every woman. For example, pregnant women should avoid estrogen therapy. Also, estrogen therapy has been associated with an increased risk of uterine cancer. Women should tell their doctor if they have ever had cancer of the breast or uterus, unusual vaginal bleeding, abnormal blood clotting or any cardiovascular disease.



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Q. *What can I expect from Estraderm as part of an osteoporosis-prevention program?*

– This depends on when you start therapy, the condition of your bones when you start, and how long you continue. You should remember that a calcium-rich diet and exercise are also an important part of an osteoporosis-prevention program.

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Important Information on Estraderm Continued from Previous Page

Estraderm®
estradiol transdermal system
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BRIEF SUMMARY (FOR FULL PRESCRIBING INFORMATION, SEE PACKAGE INSERT).

ESTROGENS HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO INCREASE THE RISK OF ENDOMETRIAL CARCINOMA.

Three independent case control studies have reported an increased risk of endometrial cancer in postmenopausal women exposed to exogenous estrogens for more than 1 year. This risk was independent of the other known risk factors for endometrial cancer. These studies are further supported by the finding that incidence rates of endometrial cancer have increased sharply since 1969 *in eight different areas of the United States with population-based* cancer-reporting systems, an increase which may be related to the rapidly expanding use of estrogens during the last decade.

The three case control studies reported that the risk of endometrial cancer in estrogen users was about 4.5-13.9 times greater than in nonusers. The risk appears to depend both on duration of treatment and on estrogen dose. In view of these findings, when estrogens are used for the treatment of menopausal symptoms, the lowest dose that will control symptoms should be utilized and medication should be discontinued as soon as possible. When prolonged treatment is medically indicated, the patient should be reassessed on at least a semiannual basis to determine the need for continued therapy. Although the evidence must be considered preliminary, one study suggests that cyclic administration of low doses of estrogen may carry less risk than continuous administration; it therefore appears prudent to utilize such a regimen.

Close clinical surveillance of all women taking estrogens is important. In all cases of undiagnosed persistent or recurring abnormal vaginal bleeding, adequate diagnostic measures should be undertaken to rule out malignancy.

There is no evidence at present that "natural" estrogens are more or less hazardous than "synthetic" estrogens at equiestrogenic doses.

ESTROGENS SHOULD NOT BE USED DURING PREGNANCY.

The use of female sex hormones, both estrogens and progestogens, during early pregnancy may seriously damage the offspring. It has been shown that women who had been exposed *in utero* to diethylstilbestrol, a nonsteroidal estrogen, have an increased risk of developing in later life a form of vaginal or cervical cancer that is ordinarily extremely rare. This risk has been estimated as not greater than 4 per 1000 exposures. Furthermore, a high percentage of such exposed women (30-90%) have been found to have vaginal adenosis, epithelial changes of the vagina and cervix. Although these changes are histologically benign, it is not known whether they are precursors of malignancy. Although similar data on the use of other estrogens are not available, it cannot be presumed they would not induce similar changes.

Several reports suggest an association between intrauterine exposure to female sex hormones and congenital anomalies, including congenital heart defects and limb-reduction defects. One case control study estimated a 4.7-fold increased risk of limb-reduction defects in infants who had been exposed *in utero* to sex hormones (oral contraceptives, hormone withdrawal tests for pregnancy, or attempted treatment for threatened abortion). Some of these exposures were very short and involved only a few days of treatment. The data suggest that the risk of limb-reduction defects in exposed fetuses is somewhat *less than 1 per 1000.*

In the past, female sex hormones have been used during pregnancy in an attempt to treat threatened or habitual abortion. There is considerable evidence that estrogens are ineffective for these indications, and there is no evidence from well-controlled studies that progestogens are effective for these uses.

If Estraderm is used during pregnancy, or if the patient becomes pregnant while taking this drug, she should be apprised of the potential risks to the fetus and of the advisability of continuation of the pregnancy.

INDICATIONS AND USAGE

Estraderm is indicated for the treatment of the following: moderate-to-severe vasomotor symptoms associated with menopause; female hypogonadism; female castration; primary ovarian failure; and atrophic conditions caused by deficient endogenous estrogen production, such as atrophic vaginitis and kraurosis vulvae; and prevention of osteoporosis (loss of bone mass).

Estrogen replacement therapy is the most effective single modality for the prevention of postmenopausal osteoporosis in women. Case-controlled studies have shown a reduction of approximately 60% in the incidence of hip and wrist fractures in women who began estrogen replacement therapy within a few years of menopause. A recent, *well-controlled, double-blind, prospective trial conducted at the Mayo Clinic* has demonstrated that treatment with Estraderm prevents bone loss in postmenopausal women at a dosage of 0.05 mg per day.

Treatment with Estraderm 0.05 mg showed full maintenance of bone density with slight (0.8%), but not significant, increase. Placebo treatment resulted in a significant loss of more than 6% below baseline vertebral bone mass. Patients using either Estraderm 0.1 mg, or 0.05 mg, had significantly greater bone densities than those using placebo.

Other studies suggest that estrogen replacement therapy reduces the rate of vertebral fractures.

Peak bone mass is reached at age 30 to 35 and can best be maximized by adequate calcium intake and exercise during the adolescent and early adult years. Early menopause is one of the best predictors for the development of osteoporosis. White women are at higher risk for osteoporosis than white men, black women are at higher risk than black men, and thin women are at higher risk than obese women. Cigarette smoking may be an additional risk factor. Calcium deficiency has been implicated in the pathogenesis of this disease. Therefore, when not contraindicated, a calcium intake of 1000-1500 mg/day either by diet or supplements is recommended for postmenopausal women.

Immobilization and prolonged bedrest produce rapid bone loss, while weight-bearing exercise has been shown to both *reduce bone loss and to increase bone mass. The* optimal type and amount of physical activity that might lower the risk of osteporosis have not been established.

CONTRAINDICATIONS

Estrogens should not be used in women or men with any of the following conditions:

1. known or suspected cancer of the breast;
2. known or suspected estrogen-dependent neoplasia;
3. known or suspected pregnancy (see Boxed Warning);
4. undiagnosed abnormal genital bleeding;
5. active thrombophlebitis or thromboembolic disorders;
6. history of thrombophlebitis, thrombosis, or thromboembolic disorders associated with previous estrogen use.

WARNINGS

1. *Induction of Malignant Neoplasms.* Long-term continuous administration of natural and synthetic estrogens in certain animal species increases the frequency of carcinomas of the breast, cervix, vagina, and liver. There are now reports that estrogens increase the risk of carcinoma of the endometrium in humans. (See Boxed Warning.)

At the present time, there is no satisfactory evidence that estrogens given to postmenopausal women increase the risk of breast cancer, although a recent long-term follow-up study has raised this possibility. Because of the animal data, there is a need for caution in prescribing estrogens for women with a strong family history of breast cancer or who have breast nodules, fibrocystic disease, or abnormal mammograms.

2. *Gallbladder Disease.* A recent study has reported a two- to threefold increase in the risk of surgically confirmed gallbladder disease in postmenopausal women receiving oral estrogens, similar to the twofold increase previously noted in users of oral contraceptives.

3. *Effects Similar to Those Caused by Estrogen-Progestogen Oral Contraceptives.* There are several serious adverse effects of oral contraceptives and other high-dose oral estrogen treatments, most of which have not, up to now, been documented as consequences of postmenopausal estrogen replacement therapy. This may reflect the comparatively low doses of estrogen used in postmenopausal women.

a. *Thromboembolic Disease.* It is now well established that users of oral contraceptives have an increased risk of various thromboembolic and thrombotic vascular diseases, such as thrombophlebitis, pulmonary embolism, stroke, and myocardial infarction. Cases of retinal thrombosis, mesenteric thrombosis, and optic neuritis have been reported in oral contraceptive users. There is evidence that the risk of several of these adverse reactions is related to the dose of the drug. An increased risk of postsurgery thromboembolic complications has also been reported in users of oral contraceptives. If feasible, estrogen should be discontinued at least 4 weeks before surgery of the type associated with an increased risk of thromboembolism, or during periods of prolonged immobilization.

While an increased rate of thromboembolic and thrombotic disease in postmenopausal users of estrogens has not been found, this does not rule out the possibility that such an increase may be present or that subgroups of women who have underlying risk factors or who are receiving relatively large doses of estrogens may have increased risk. Therefore, estrogens should not be used in persons with active thrombophlebitis or thromboembolic disorders, and they should not be used in persons with a history of such disorders in association with estrogen use. They should be used with caution in patients with cerebral vascular or coronary artery disease and only for those in whom estrogens are clearly needed.

Large doses of estrogen (5 mg conjugated estrogens per day), comparable to those *used to treat cancer of the prostate and breast, have been shown in a large prospective* clinical trial in men to increase the risk of nonfatal myocardial infarction, pulmonary embolism, and thrombophlebitis. When estrogen doses of this size are used, any of the thromboembolic and thrombotic adverse effects associated with oral contraceptive use should be considered a clear risk.

b. *Hepatic Adenoma.* Benign hepatic adenomas have been associated with the use of oral contraceptives. Although benign and rare, these tumors may rupture and cause death from intra-abdominal hemorrhage. Such lesions have not yet been reported in association with other estrogen or progestogen preparations, but they should be considered if abdominal pain and tenderness, abdominal mass, or hypovolemic shock occurs in patients receiving estrogen. Hepatocellular carcinoma has also been reported in women taking estrogen-containing oral contraceptives. The causal relationship of this malignancy to these drugs is not known.

c. *Elevated Blood Pressure.* Women using oral contraceptives sometimes experience increased blood pressure which, in most cases, returns to normal upon discontinuing the drug. There is now a report that this may occur with use of oral estrogens in the menopause and blood pressure should be monitored with estrogen use, especially if high doses are used. Ethinyl estradiol and conjugated estrogens have been shown to increase renin substrate. In contrast to these oral estrogens, transdermally administered estradiol does not affect renin substrate.

d. *Glucose Tolerance.* A worsening of glucose tolerance has been observed in a significant percentage of patients on estrogen-containing oral contraceptives. For this reason, diabetic patients should be carefully observed while receiving estrogen.

4. *Hypercalcemia.* Administration of high doses of estrogens may lead to severe hypercalcemia in patients with breast cancer and bone metastases. If hypercalcemia occurs, use of the drug should be stopped and appropriate measures should be taken to reduce the serum calcium level.

PRECAUTIONS

General

1. A complete medical and family history should be taken before initiation of any estrogen therapy. The pretreatment and periodic physical examinations should include special reference to blood pressure, breasts, abdomen, and pelvic organs, as well as a cervical Papanicolaou test. As a general rule, estrogen should not be prescribed for longer than 1 year without another physical examination being performed.
2. Because estrogens may cause some degree of fluid retention, careful observation is required when conditions that might be influenced by this factor are present (e.g., asthma, epilepsy, migraine, and cardiac or renal dysfunction).
3. Certain patients may develop undesirable manifestations of excessive estrogenic stimulation, such as uterine bleeding, mastodynia, etc.
4. Prolonged administration of unopposed estrogen therapy has been reported to increase the risk of endometrial hyperplasia in some patients. Estrogens should be used with caution in patients who have or have had endometriosis.
5. Studies of the addition of a progestin for 7 or more days of a cycle of estrogen administration have reported a lowered incidence of endometrial hyperplasia. Morphological and biochemical studies of endometrium suggest that 12 to 13 days of progestin are needed to provide maximal maturation of the endometrium and to eliminate any hyperplastic changes. Whether this will provide protection from endometrial carcinoma has not been clearly established. There are possible additional risks that may be associated with the inclusion of progestin in estrogen replacement regimens. The potential risks include adverse effects on carbohydrate and lipid metabolism. The choice of progestin and dosage may be important in minimizing these adverse effects.
6. Oral contraceptives appear to be associated with an increased incidence of mental depression. Although it is not clear whether this is due to the estrogenic or progestogenic component of the contraceptive, patients with a history of depression should be carefully observed.
7. Preexisting uterine leiomyomata may increase in size during prolonged estrogen use. If this occurs, estrogen therapy should be discontinued while the cause is investigated.
8. In patients with a history of jaundice during pregnancy, there is an increased risk that jaundice will recur with the use of estrogen-containing oral contraceptives. If jaundice develops in any patient receiving estrogen, the medication should be discontinued while the cause is investigated.
9. Estrogens may be poorly metabolized in patients with impaired liver function and should be administered with caution in such patients.
10. Because the prolonged use of estrogens influences the metabolism of calcium and phosphorus, estrogens should be used with caution in patients with metabolic bone diseases associated with hypercalcemia and in patients with renal insufficiency.

Information for Patients

See Patient Package Insert printed below.

Drug/Laboratory Test Interactions

The results of certain endocrine and liver function tests may be affected by estrogen-containing oral contraceptives. The following changes have been observed with large doses of oral estrogen:

1. increased sulfobromophthalein retention;
2. increased prothrombin time; increased factors VII, VIII, IX, and X; decreased antithrombin 3; increased norepinephrine-induced platelet aggregability;
3. increased thyroxine-binding globulin (TBG), leading to increased circulating total thyroid hormone (T_4) as measured by column or radioimmunoassay; free T_3 resin uptake is decreased, reflecting the elevated TBG; free T_4 concentration is unaltered; TBG was not affected in clinical trials of Estraderm;
4. reduced response to the metyrapone test;
5. reduced serum folate concentration;
6. increased serum triglyceride and phospholipid concentration, and decreased pregnanediol excretion.

The pathologist should be informed that the patient is receiving estrogen therapy when relevant specimens are submitted.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility

See WARNINGS and Boxed Warning.

Long-term continuous administration of natural and synthetic estrogens in certain animal species increases the frequency of carcinomas of the breast, cervix, vagina, and liver.

Pregnancy Category X

See CONTRAINDICATIONS and Boxed Warning.

Estrogens should not be used during pregnancy.

Nursing Mothers

As a general principle, the administration of any drug to nursing mothers should be done only when clearly necessary since many drugs are excreted in human milk.

ADVERSE REACTIONS

See WARNINGS and Boxed Warning regarding potential adverse effects on the fetus, induction of malignant neoplasms, increased incidence of gallbladder disease, and adverse effects similar to those of oral contraceptives, including thromboembolism.

The most commonly reported adverse reaction to Estraderm in clinical trials was redness and irritation at the application site. This occurred in about 17% of the women treated and caused approximately 2% to discontinue therapy. Reports of rash have been rare.

The following additional adverse reactions have been reported with estrogenic therapy, including oral contraceptives:

Genitourinary System: Breakthrough bleeding, spotting, change in menstrual flow; increase in size of uterine fibromyomata; change in cervical erosion and amount of cervical secretion.

Endocrine: Breast tenderness, breast enlargement.

Gastrointestinal: Nausea, vomiting; abdominal cramps, bloating; cholestatic jaundice have been observed with oral estrogen therapy.

Eyes: Steepening of corneal curvature; intolerance to contact lenses.

Central Nervous System: Headache, migraine, dizziness.

Miscellaneous: Change in weight, edema, change in libido.

DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

The adhesive side of the Estraderm system should be placed on a clean, dry area of the skin on the trunk of the body, (including the buttocks and abdomen). *Estraderm should not be applied to the breasts.* The sites of application must be rotated, with an interval of at least 1 week allowed between applications to a particular site. The area *selected should not be oily, damaged, or irritated. The waistline should be avoided,* since tight clothing may rub the system off. The system should be applied immediately after opening the pouch and removing the protective liner. The system should be pressed firmly in place with the palm of the hand for about 10 seconds, making sure there is good contact, especially around the edges. In the unlikely event that a system should fall off, the same system may be reapplied. If necessary, a new system may be applied. In either case, the original treatment schedule should be continued.

Initiation of Therapy

Treatment of menopausal symptoms is usualy initiated with Estraderm 0.05 mg applied to the skin twice weekly. The dosage should be adjusted as necessary to control symptoms. The lowest dosage necessary for the control of symptoms should be used, especially in women with an intact uterus. Attempts to taper or discontinue the medication should be made at 3- to 6-month intervals.

Prophylactic therapy with Estraderm to prevent postmenopausal bone loss should be initiated with the 0.05 mg/day dosage as soon as possible after menopause. The dosage may be adjusted if necessary to control concurrent menopausal symptoms. Discontinuation of estrogen replacement therapy may reestablish the natural rate of bone loss.

In women not currently taking oral estrogens, treatment with Estraderm may be initiated at once. In women who are currently taking oral estrogen, treatment with Estraderm should be initiated 1 week after withdrawal of oral hormone replacement therapy, or sooner if menopausal symptoms reappear in less than 1 week.

Therapeutic Regimen

Estraderm therapy may be given continuously in patients who do not have an intact uterus. In those patients with an intact uterus, Estraderm may be given on a cyclic schedule (e.g., 3 weeks on drug followed by 1 week off drug).

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by Bruce McCall

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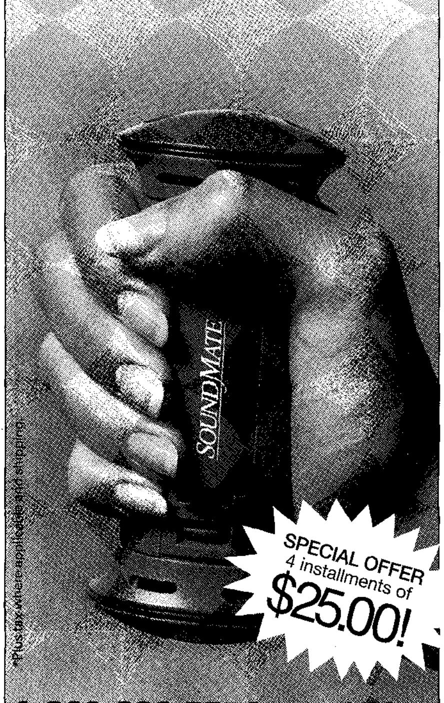

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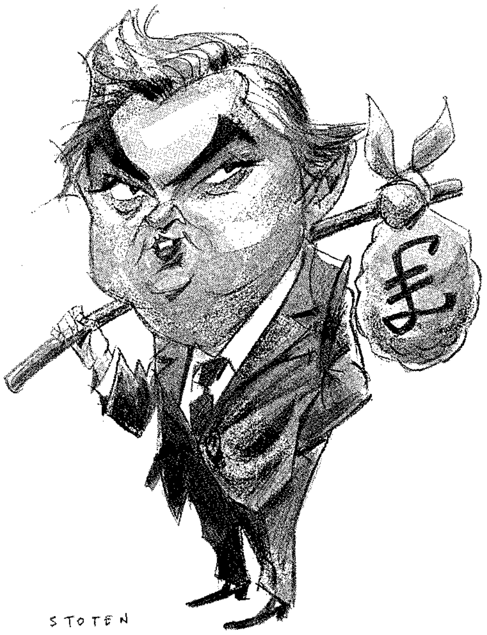
LETTER FROM LONDON

OVER THE LIMIT

by Julian Barnes

HISTORY, even when in trivial, jesting mood, often comes in incompatible versions. So during the last week of November the British public hunched frowningly over the following conundrum. Did a short, plump middle-aged man, his hair mashed into a rather ridiculous graying quiff, enter Thresher's off-license in Praed Street, Paddington, on the evening of Monday, November 16th, and there purchase one bottle of Bricout champagne, plus a packet of Raffles cigarettes (total cost £17.47), or did the same man go into a different branch of the same liquor chain on the previous day and there buy three bottles of wine (total cost also £17.47)? It would matter very little to most of us, but it mattered very much indeed to the man in question, Mr. Norman Lamont, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

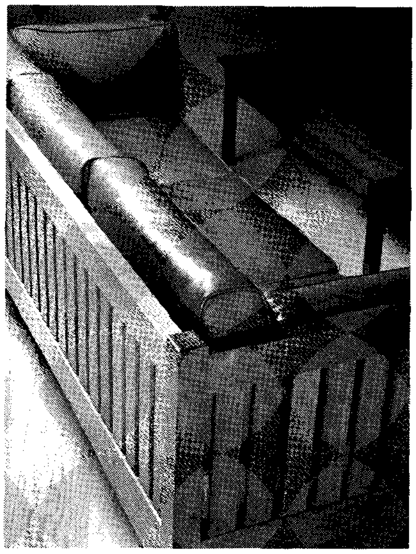
The story began on November 26th, when the *Sun* published an irresistible tipoff from a mole inside the National Westminster Bank. The Chancellor, the informant disclosed, was currently four hundred and seventy pounds over the limit on his Access credit card; not only that but Mr. Lamont had breached his limit twenty-two times in the previous eight years, and had received no fewer than five written warnings after failing to make the required monthly payments. Downing Street huffed and puffed at the news, denouncing the failure to respect confidentiality, and claiming that the latest unpaid bill had only gone astray because of construction at No. 11, the Chancellor's official London residence. Few were impressed by this flimsy defense, and opinion varied from those who saw a shocking failure of security on the bank's part, plus a shocking intrusiveness by the press, to those who professed deep unsurprise at the revelation, given the general state of the British economy under Mr. Lamont's stewardship, and for whom the revealed congruity between public and private carelessness seemed perfectly apt.



Norman Lamont's "dirty claret" antics force the question of how much longer the British public will pick up the tab for its wayward leaders.

Tucked away in the *Sun's* report, however, was a small paragraph about Mr. Lamont's using his Access card in the Paddington area the previous Monday. The *Evening Standard* sent out a reporter and turned up John Onanuga, an assistant at the Praed Street branch of Thresher's, who vividly recalled serving the Chancellor. According to Mr. Onanuga, Mr. Lamont had first examined a bottle of £11.99 Tescombes Brut champagne, the cheapest in the shop, and then moved up to the mid-range £15.49 Bricout, which was being promoted, appropriately enough, as a "recession-busting" item. The Chancellor also bought a packet of Raffles 100s, a low-tar cigarette retailing cheaply at £1.98. Mr. Onanuga said that he had recognized Mr. Lamont, as had a woman in the shop, and had also noticed the House of Commons pass in his wallet; he added that the Chancellor had particularly wanted a bottle of champagne that was already chilled.

DAVID STOTEN



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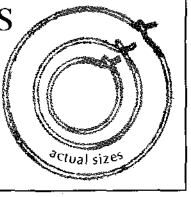

All this seemingly trite substantiating detail was in fact potentially lethal. Mr. Lamont is known to smoke only small cigars; his wife does not smoke at all. Raffles, in any case, is hardly a brand either of them would be likely to smoke; the cigarette's image is one of down-market attempted glamour—you might expect a man who smoked Raffles to have a rusting car with a Playboy badge on the back, and a woman who smoked Raffles to dream of sexually ensnaring her boss behind the filing cabinets at the Christmas office party. And what, moreover, about the chilled champagne? This hinted at—no, screamed—immediate consumption. On the Monday evening in question, Mr. Lamont had apparently left a civil-service select committee at six-fifteen, and was next seen at an official reception at No. 11 a while later. Journalists muttered about "the missing hour and a half," which translated into newspaper headlines like "WHAT WERE YOU UP TO NORM?" (*Daily Star*).

Fleet Street can scent the possibilities of sex like a tile-tripping tomcat; and while sex—by which we mean, of course, extramarital or otherwise non-conformist sex—is not in itself enough to burn a minister at the stake, it makes excellent kindling. The best way to bring down a member of the government in Britain is to link private indiscretion to public incompetence. Here the argument does not go: Ah, I see the Minister was engaging in sexual activity—well, that's probably relaxed him after a tough week of decision-making and sent him back to his desk with a fresh mind. No, the argument tends to run: Look what the Minister was up to when he should have been attending to great affairs of state. At times, of course, the Minister in question aids and abets this interpretation. The last of John Major's close associates to fall, David Mellor, then Secretary of State for National Heritage, made a phone call to his actress girlfriend in which he maintained that their previous sexual encounter had been so exquisite and so prolonged that he did not have the energy to write his next ministerial speech. Now, this could have been mere intimate praise, a lover's courtesy, but the phone happened to be tapped, and British puritanism supplied the textual exegesis: Minister too shagged out to think straight. The illegality of the phone tap was a mere side

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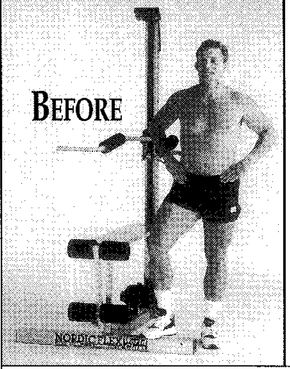

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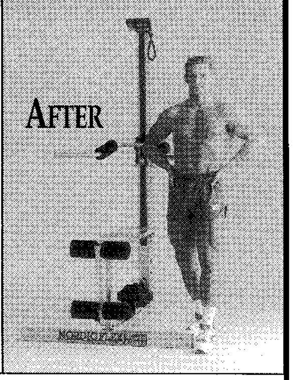

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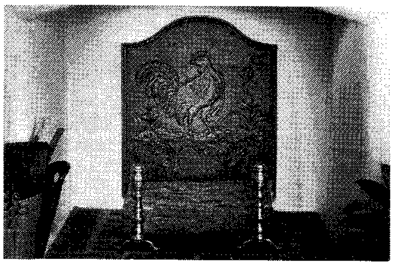

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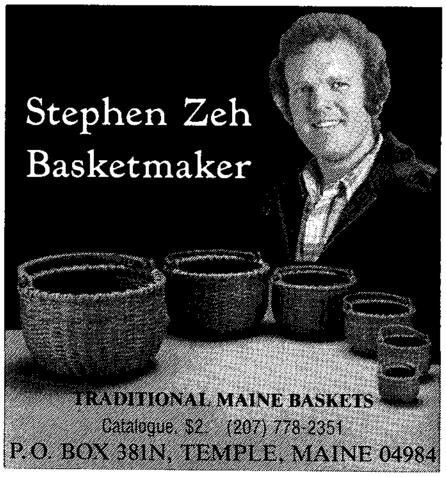

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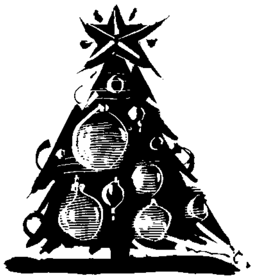
issue in Mr. Mellor's fall. So was the fact that most ministerial speeches are of such low quality anyway that an outside observer would be hard-pressed to judge where in the politician's private sexual cycle any particular speech resided. Germaine Greer, when put up in debate against the sort of crusty old male who argues that women can't do really complicated and demanding jobs, like fly an airplane or run the country, because, well, er, you see, the fact of the matter is that every so often, about once a month, actually, they, how shall we put it, become a little unreliable—Ms. Greer would on such occasions look the geezer magnificently in the eye and say, "Am I menstruating now?" Ministers might in turn try a similar ploy when congratulated on an effective speech: "Fact of the matter is, old boy, had a spot of how's-your-father last night, properly sets you up for speechifying, y'know."

The most politically wounding part of the story ought to have been the details of Mr. Lamont's Access account. If you want to connect private and public spheres of activity, and allege that behavior in one affects behavior in the other, then here was a vast opportunity. A private individual who heedlessly runs up debt, and by not paying off that debt incurs a punitively hefty rate of interest, who has to be booted into line by the credit authorities, and blames the builders for his failure to respond to his latest bill? Could there be any connection with a chancellor who presided over a whacking hike in public-sector borrowing, who kept the pound at an indefensibly high level, who maintained that Britain would never leave the exchange-rate mechanism until the day Britain left the exchange-rate mechanism, and who likes to blame everything on the Germans and the Bundesbank? Does this or does this not sound like the same man?

Mr. Lamont has not been one of the more impressive chancellors of recent decades. He is said to be "overpromoted." Apart from anything else, he never seems to exude much confidence that he *is* the chancellor. I once saw a game show on television in which the same piece of music was played three times by the same studio band but was conducted each time by a different person. The contestants had to guess which of the three was a genuine musical conductor; the two other baton-wavers, it was explained to viewers, were bus conductors. Mr. Lamont has always seemed the bus-conductor type of chancellor: one who scoops his hands up and down while music is played but has no special idea what tune is coming out, or how the musicians manage their instruments. Most people admit to little understanding of economics, while worrying a fair deal about it; so public confidence in the chancellor depends on more than just his choice of policy. An important part of his function is to look as if he knows what he is doing while blaming others—France, Germany, the world—for the economic ills of the nation; to maintain grandly that "we shall not be blown off course," whatever the barometer indicates; and to reassure the public with an air of weighty savvy. But what if the nation knows that it is suffering the worst recession in sixty years, that bankruptcies and mass redundancies continue unabated, and that the man in supposed charge of it all, who claimed to spot "green shoots" in the economy when others saw only a trampled mud field, doesn't appear able to keep a grip on his own finances? In such a case, statesmanlike posing from the chancellor is likely to carry less conviction.

But this is, of course, a position—an editorial statement—rather than a running story. Downing Street did not attempt to rebut the disclosures about Mr. Lamont's lamentable credit record, because they were irrebuttable; the battle was fought over Mr. Lamont's moral rather than financial creditworthiness, and took place amid the stacked pre-Christmas shelves of West London off-licenses. The full power of the British Treasury was now ranged against Mr. Onanuga. Officials telephoned newspapers with the Downing Street version of events: Mr. Lamont had never set foot in the Praed Street Thresher's but had called in at another branch the previous day on his way back from his official Buckinghamshire residence; nor, of course, had he bought chilled champagne and a pack of Raffles—just three bottles of wine. Needless to say, this primary denial was little believed: would you take the word of an unnamed Treasury spokesman against that of an assistant in your local offie? Almost certainly not. Besides, Mr. Onanuga had apparently told his store manager and his girlfriend that he had served Mr. Lamont days before the *Sun* broke its story.

Thresher's is a subsidiary of Whitbread, a large brewing company that is also—as conspiracy theorists were quick to point out—a major donor to the Conservative Party. (This last detail is probably not as significant as it seems: you would be hard put to find a company as large as Whitbread giving money to any party other than the Conservatives.) Thresher's held an emergency board meeting at its Welwyn Garden City headquarters; thousands of credit-card vouchers were examined by staff; and at the end of it the company confirmed the Treasury's version of events, while continuing not to specify the branch where Mr. Lamont had shopped, and denounced its own employee's story as "wholly inaccurate and without foundation."



On the night of Sunday, November 29th, in a final attempt to put the cork in the bottle, the Treasury released a copy of a Thresher's register receipt bearing the Chancellor's signature. This showed the date as November 15th (the Sunday), the time as 7:19 P.M., and the amount paid as £17.47, and it itemized two bottles of J. P. Bartier claret, at £3.99, plus one bottle of 1990 Margaux from Sichel, at £9.49. Mr. Lamont then released his own copy of the receipt, which added a final detail: the identity of the Thresher's branch in question—one in Connaught Street, a few blocks away from Praed Street. Finally, a Thresher's spokeswoman announced that Mr. Onanuga and his store manager had admitted that their story was "totally fabricated" but said that they "did not mean to cause Mr. Lamont any trouble." So why might they have done it? Were they part, wittingly or unwittingly, of some wider conspiracy to undermine the Chancellor? Did they wish to wind up the press and set it running in best headless-chicken mode? Either way, the men were not produced for journalistic cross-examination and were suspended "in line with normal disciplinary procedures"—as if there had been anything normal about the preceding tale. Only a couple of minor points remained. When journalists tried to obtain from Thresher's the two wines Mr. Lamont had bought only a fortnight earlier, they discovered that both had been taken off the shelves for what was described as "precautionary quality control." And, lastly, how strange that, given all the publicity, given knowledge of the exact date, time, and location of Mr. Lamont's purchase, no one had come forward from the Connaught Street shop with the memory of having served the rather recognizable Chancellor.

So, after a week of vintage-quibbling, the story petered out, with an appropriate tasting-note from the wine writer Jancis Robinson; asked if she had come across Mr. Lamont's cellar selections, she consulted her records and found that she had dismissed the J. P. Bartier claret in a single word: "dirty." The story was now also dismissed, though only in the sense that a small cloud can be swallowed up by a larger one. For it was at precisely the moment of the Praed Street affair that an earlier embarrassment in Mr. Lamont's tenure as Chancellor bobbed up again, like a dead dog in a dirty river. This one involved, well, yes, sex, though even the most prurient mind did not finger Mr. Lamont himself in this context. It began when he was appointed Chancellor, in November of 1990—a job that brought with it a salary of £63,047, a government car, and the use of two houses: 11 Downing Street for work, and a forty-five-room Buckinghamshire mansion for weekends and holidays. This superabundance of housing meant that Mr. Lamont was able to rent out his own dwelling, in Notting Hill. The following April, it turned out that the tenant in his basement, one Sara Dale, who had described herself in her rental agreement as a "therapist dealing with stress and nutritional management," was, in the language of the *News of the World*, a "busty hooker," and that her therapy involved punishment and payment (ninety pounds per hour) of an all too predict-

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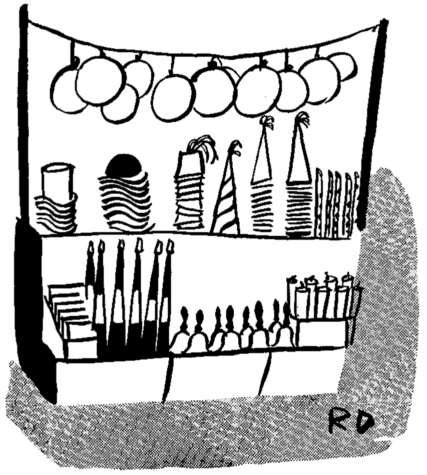
able nature. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Lamont had met this professional lady; she had been found, it seems, by reputable agents who had taken personal references from "solicitors, a bank, and a building society." When he heard that the story was about to break, Mr. Lamont not unnaturally went to see a solicitor. What was surprising was his choice of Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners, one of Britain's best-known and supposedly most expensive libel firms. Their job was (1) to evict the embarrassing woman (not their normal line of business); (2) to handle press inquiries (though there was also the Treasury press office, which would not have charged); and (3), perhaps most important, to warn newspapers to be careful what they wrote. As a further incentive to speed Miss Dale, Carter-Ruck took out a quite extraordinary writ for defamation against the therapist, alleging damage to the reputation of Mr. Lamont's property caused by her presence in it. It seems that in British law you can libel a building. Whether prospective buyers or tenants might have thought that the property's reputation had already been sufficiently diminished by having a politician living in it was not, alas, tested in court.

The solicitors' bill for this work—an unopposed eviction case, some phone-answering, plus a bit of watch-your-step to Fleet Street—came to a staggering £23,114.64, the equivalent of two hundred and fifty-seven hours of "stress therapy" from Miss Dale, or approximately five thousand eight hundred bottles of J. P. Bartier claret. Not a penny of this was coughed up by Mr. Lamont himself. Most of the bill was paid by a generous but unnamed Conservative Party supporter, while £4,700 (four thousand pounds plus Value Added Tax) came from Treasury funds. The justification for this latter contribution, which for a year and a half was successfully concealed from the public, ran as follows: if ministers are involved in legal actions relating to official duties, they may, under a Cabinet Office code of guidance, be indemnified with taxpayers' money. Apparently, the then Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, Sir Peter Middleton, told Mr. Lamont that it was "reasonable and proper" for the Treasury to meet a portion of the bill: the £4,700 thus paid was for Mr. Carter-Ruck's firm to issue a statement about potential libel and handle subsequent press inquiries (at two hundred pounds per hour, in case you are thinking of employing them). There seem to be three problem areas in all this. First, whether "legal action" can be stretched to include "preëmptive legal strikes against possible libels"; second, whether Mr. Lamont should have chosen a famously expensive firm when some of his bill was being footed by the public; and, third, whether his case fell remotely within the Cabinet Office guidelines. It's true that if he had not been appointed Chancellor he wouldn't have been able to rent out his own house and therefore wouldn't have been obliged to evict the stress therapist, but it's hard to see how this domestic irritation could be said to have anything in the world to do with his official duties.

MR. LAMONT is currently being described as "accident-prone"—political shorthand for "incompetent beyond the dreams of the Opposition"—and is sternly announcing that he will not resign (often a prelude to resignation). But his predicament is far from unique. Consider its elements: unfortunate image, doubtful competence, public unpopularity, plus a willingness to let others pay your bills. Who else fits this profile perfectly? The British Royal Family, of course. And in the very week that Mr. Lamont was desperately defending his reputation and his job, the Queen was defending hers, too. In a speech at the Guildhall to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of her accession to the throne, she made a rare public appeal for sympathy, and even acknowledged that there was room for debate over the nature of the organization she heads. "There can be no doubt, of course, that criticism is good for people and institutions that are part of public life," she said. "No institution—City, monarchy, whatever—should expect to be free from the scrutiny of those who give it their loyalty and support, not to mention those who don't. But we are all part of the same fabric of our national society and that scrutiny, by one part of another, can be just as effective if it is made with a touch of gentleness, good humor and understanding." This may seem bland and banal to a reader living in a republic, but in a British context it was positively self-lacerating.



Her Majesty admitted that 1992 had been for her an "*annus horribilis.*" The sexual and marital tomfoolery among her whelps was indeed terrible P.R. for Windsor Inc. And the year closed with bad news feeding off bad, so that even a potentially blithe event was thrown out of kilter by the murk surrounding it. This was the case with Princess Anne's remarriage on a raw and snow-threatening Scottish afternoon. It could have been a mildly upbeat affair, contributing a speck of much-needed image-modernization to the family: here, after all, was a divorced woman in her forties marrying a chap five years her junior, and also introducing a few welcome (if dilute) Jewish molecules into the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha blood royal. Instead, the union was swamped by the backwash from Charles and Diana's separation, and the fact that the event took place in Scotland merely pointed up the current impossibility of royal remarriage within the Church of England. What was billed necessarily as a "quiet family affair" smacked instead of a dynasty hunkering and bunkering down against misfortune. The rare dispatch with which Anne married Commander Tim Laurence even depressed the normally buoyant memorabilia market. Previous royal hitchings produced hundreds of commercial supplicants to Buckingham Palace, asking permission to vend jaunty mugs and smile-filled T-shirts. By the time Anne and Tim had signed the register, however, only a single such request had filtered in to the Palace. One manufacturer from Stoke-on-Trent commented glumly, "We didn't think anyone would want to buy Anne and Tim tea towels."

Whether there will be Royal Worcester oil-and-vinegar cruets to mark Charles and Di's official separation remains to be seen. This public acknowledgment of a widely reported reality was no doubt designed as some sort of solution; but at best it is no more than a holding operation, opening up more possibilities than it closes down. (Separate lives, separate courts, separate lovers? A tabloid editor's dream.) Worse, it refocussed the same problems as in the Lamont case: the tie-in between the private and the public life. If you don't view the Royal Family as the privileged descendants of a bunch of brigands and main-chancers airbrushed into respectability by high-quality P.R. (with even Shakespeare & Co. engaged on the account), then you tend to invoke symbolic identity, public service, duty, and so forth. During various official junkets (the Coronation, the Investiture of the Prince of Wales), various Royals pronounce various vows whose texts are rarely scoured. But, roughly, they say: we promise to do our duty as symbolic top people, figureheads of the nation, defenders of the established church, and in return you give us your fealty, some of your money, and applause *ad libitum*. This larger pledge for the most part wafts mistily in the air, while groundlings pay closer attention to the lesser pledges: for instance, the marriage vows, promises to forsake all others and so on, made before a television audience and a priest of the said established church. So what happens when the marital log of Elizabeth II's children shows a hundred-per-cent failure rate? Do we merely blame the press? Do we look with a darker, different eye upon the parents? Or do we say that this is the royal equivalent of Mr. Lamont's infraction, and that the family is recklessly running over the credit limit of its moral Access cards?

And the fact that "we" are talking about it in this newly authoritative way indicates that another shift has taken place. As at the time of the 1936 Abdication, there is now talk of a constitutional crisis. There isn't one, inasmuch as there is very little constitution to refer to; rather, there are the gravid views of a group of political and spiritual power brokers who take it upon themselves to be moral arbiters. When Edward VIII—like Charles, a late marrier—was forced out, the viziers involved were the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the editor of the *Times*. The historian

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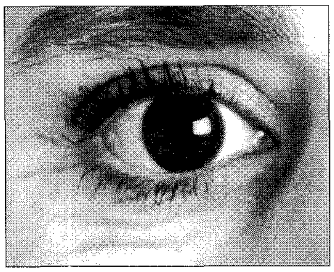
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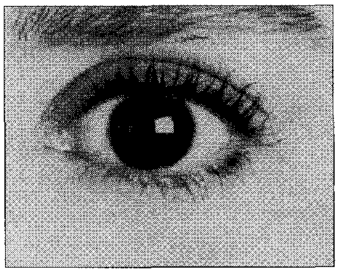
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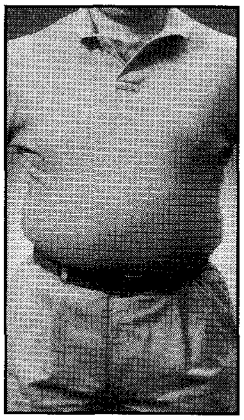
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A. J. P. Taylor described these three "directors of public life" as talking subsequently "as though they had triumphed over the laxity inherited from the nineteen-twenties."

Currently, the main pseudo-constitutional questions being asked are: Can Diana be crowned Queen if she and Charles are living apart; and shouldn't Charles give up the throne in favor of his elder son, William? The directors of public life have in the meantime changed. Rupert Murdoch's *Times* is much less influential, the Prime Minister is an easygoing loyalist, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is a member of the happy-clappy persuasion. While the Palace seems to have lost the knack of setting the agenda itself, far more important is a loose crew of tabloid editors, opinion pollsters, and royal experts. So Charles is being and will continue to be tried in some informal court of morals and popularity. No matter that he is the legitimate heir to the throne, that he is still of sound mind, and that he has been trained all his life to assume the function of monarch. How will this stack up against the fact that he two-timed the most popular woman in Britain?

And then, on top of all this domestic drama, there is the question of money. This arose with a vengeful suddenness in the wake of the Windsor Castle fire. Normally, a good blaze plays in a predictable fashion, producing a sort of subdued Reichstag effect. (One could even imagine a junior Royal torching the castle to reattract public sympathy.) But the opposite occurred. Peter Brooke, Secretary of State for National Heritage, no doubt imagined he was being a loyal minister and an uncontroversial citizen when he announced the next day in the House of Commons that the state would pick up the estimated sixty-million-pound tab for restoring "this most precious and well-loved part of our national heritage." Buckingham Palace confirmed that the Queen herself would pay only for the repair of damaged artifacts from her private collection—which seemed to come in at a few carpets and chandeliers, plus various items dented by the fireman. Both sides agreed that the financial position was clear. Windsor Castle belonged not to the Queen as a private individual but to the Crown; therefore, the Crown, meaning the state, meaning the taxpayer, would have to fork out.

However, the taxpayer was not very impressed by what was being done in his or her name. It's true that sixty million pounds, spread over a number of years, is nothing in terms of the national budget—about the equivalent of a couple of bottles of dirty claret from a Paddington off-license. But the taxpayer has had many years now of being told by a Conservative government that public services must slim down, be efficient, give value for money—political cant constantly wheeled out to justify closing down hospitals, schools, libraries, and so on. Why should this principle and these phrases not apply equally to the public services provided by the Royal Family?

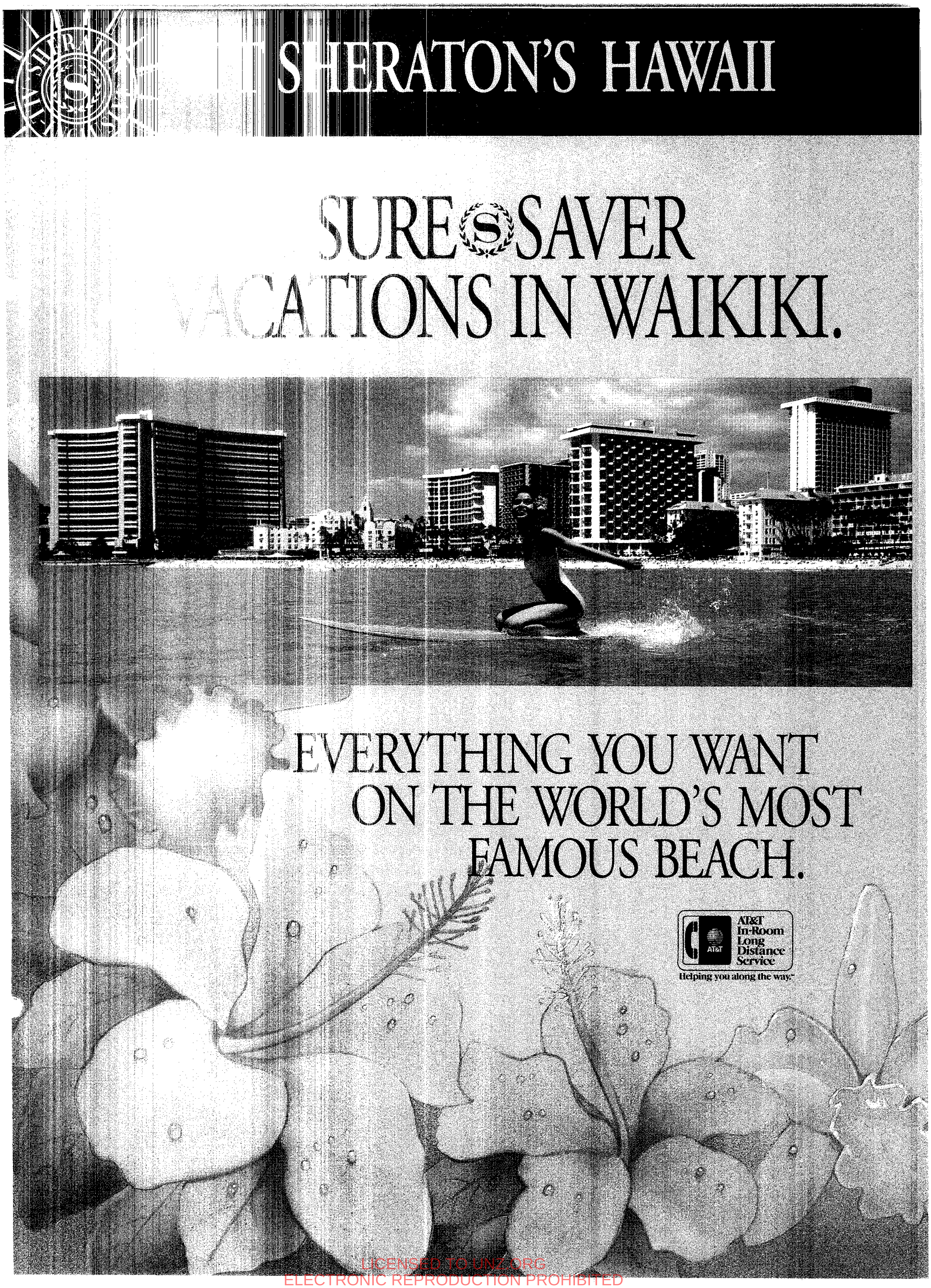
Of course, it's often difficult to assess what "the public" thinks. In royal matters, "public attitudes" seem to be assembled from ad-hoc opinion polls plus the shifting editorial viewpoints of normally monarchist newspapers. In a February, 1991, poll, nearly eight out of ten people interviewed thought the Queen should pay tax; more recently, the *Sun* found that 59,553 of its readers believed that the Queen should fund the repairs to Windsor Castle, while only 3,843 believed that the state should do so. No one, it must be emphasized, took to the streets on this matter; no pikes were waved, with blades greased for inserting in severed Windsor heads. But the monarchy's advisers can tell what is just a straw in the wind and what looks more like a whole damn haystack. So it was not exactly a coincidence that two days after the Queen's unprecedented appeal for sympathy the Prime Minister announced that she and the Prince of Wales had agreed to pay tax on their private incomes, and that five lesser Royals—Princess Anne, Princes Andrew and Edward, Princess Margaret, and Princess Alice—would in future be paid out of the Queen's pocket, thus sparing the Civil List nine hundred thousand pounds per annum. Mr. Major indicated that the Queen herself had initiated discussions on this matter back in the summer, long before the smoke rose at Windsor. The *Sun* congratulated its readers with the headline "YOU SPOKE—SHE LISTENED" and acclaimed the victory of "People Power."

d. ehrenberg

It was a tiny triumph, a successful protest squeak after decades of barnacled deference. A nation that three and a half centuries ago didn't shrink from executing Charles I has for too long winced at the idea of examining the sovereign's check stubs: the Queen's untaxability has been seen as somehow part of her separateness, her magnificence, her magic. Money still has a quasi-lavatorial shame attaching to it in some sections of British society, with royal cash best discussed both in hugger-mugger and on bended knee. The last time the Windsor stipend was renegotiated—in 1990, when Mrs. Thatcher was Prime Minister and Mr. Major her Chancellor of the Exchequer—a ten-year index-linked, inflation-proof deal was signed, with a special promise from the government that no new accounts of how the Queen spent her money would be published before the year 2000.

Most people waking up to the Queen's nod of fiscal submission probably believed that exposing Elizabeth to the lads from the Inland Revenue was a major constitutional breakthrough. But when income tax was first introduced on a permanent basis, in 1842, the then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, persuaded Queen Victoria to pay this new levy on all her income, from whatever source. She did so until her death, in 1901, and ever since the principal narrative line has been of the monarchy's trying with increasing success to be let off as much tax as possible. Edward VII made the first move, on his accession, but was fobbed off by a government fighting a money-intensive Boer War at the time. However, George V managed to get the Civil List exempted from tax, and George VI, in a series of agreements concealed from Parliamentary scrutiny, succeeded in removing income tax from private income as well. This has been the position for the past fifty-six years.

Income tax was trifling throughout the nineteenth century, so Queen Vic-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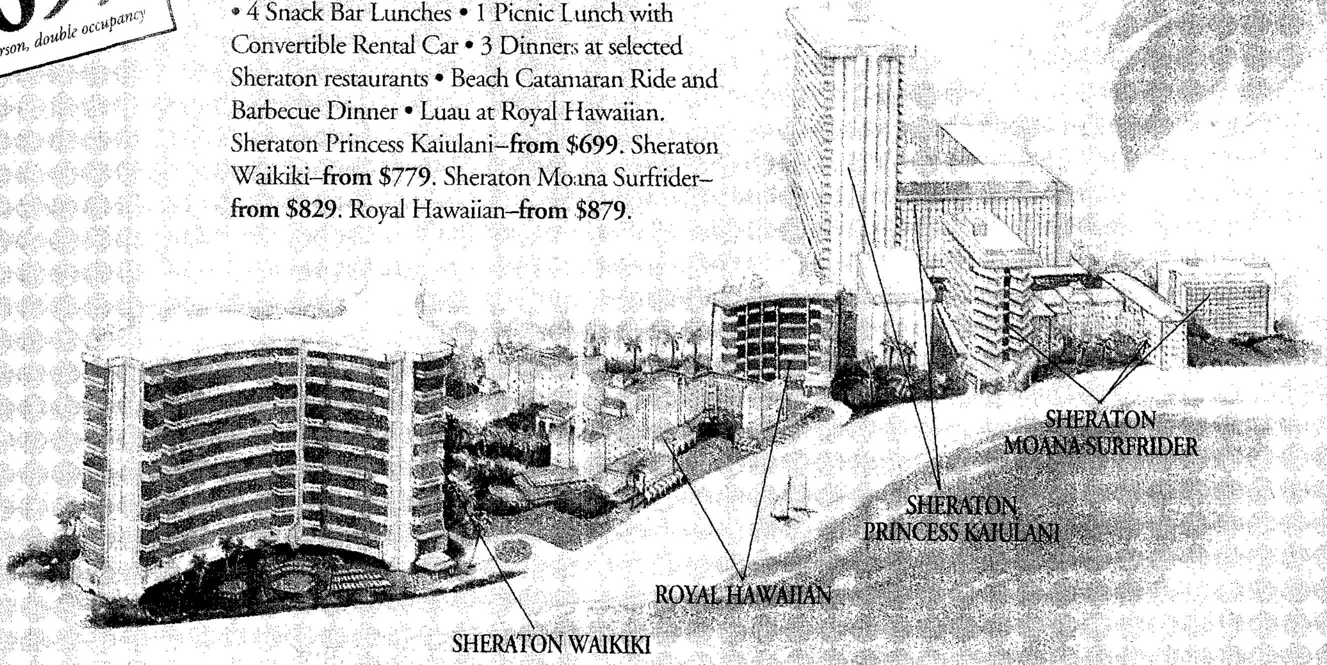

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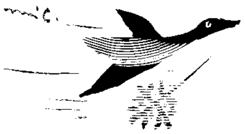
toria could well afford to pay it. Serious increases began only in 1906, when Lloyd George introduced his first budget and began to lay the foundations of the welfare state. What has happened since then is that the tax burden has been greatly increased—rising to ninety-seven and a half per cent between 1941 and 1953, and reaching ninety-eight per cent between 1975 and 1979—while the Royal Family has progressively argued itself out of contributing to the state over which it has presided. Part of the current sovereign's private wealth arises directly from this exemption. If one pound were invested in averagely producing shares in 1936 (the last year the monarch paid tax), an investor who had paid tax at the top rate down the years would today find his or her stake worth forty-two pounds, whereas a non-taxpaying king or queen would find the same portfolio worth four hundred and eighteen pounds. To put it another way: the lowest estimate of the Queen's private wealth is fifty million pounds, a sum that could have been generated had her father, George VI, invested a mere hundred and nineteen thousand pounds in 1936 in a spread of British shares.



Queen to Pay Tax! Triumph of People Power! Yes, up to a point. But how much she will pay, and on what, is an altogether different matter, not to be decided by newspaper phone-ins. Discussions will now proceed in extreme secrecy as to what, exactly, belongs to the Queen (Balmoral, Sandringham, her racing stables) and what belongs to the state and is merely used by the Queen (Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, the royal yacht); then there is a third category of items, like the Crown Jewels, the Royal Art Collection, and even the Royal Stamp Collection, which are generally deemed inalienable, vested in the sovereign rather than the individual, and therefore not taxable. And after the division of the spoils has been made, there will presumably be meaty arguments about the Queen's professional allowances. What will the Revenue permit her? How many frocks and shoes are deemed essential for the job? She will, of course, be able to claim a personal exemption of £3,445, and if she can successfully argue that her husband does not work, she will benefit from an additional allowance of £1,720.

Estimates of the Queen's wealth vary according to how you do the sums. At one end, fifty million pounds; at the other, six and a half billion—a figure dismissed rather pertly by young Prince Edward as "absolute crap." That in some sense his mother lives frugally (worn stair carpet, or whatever) is not in dispute; nor is the fact that she is one of the richest women in the land. She has of late, it seems, had to dig into her reserves of capital to provide for her errant brood; and her other bloodstock business—that involving horseflesh—is said to lose five hundred thousand pounds a year at the moment. So early estimates suggest that the Exchequer may be enriched by no more than about two million a year from Mrs. E of Windsor. The agreement to pay tax will hardly rescue the next budget of Mr. Lamont (or his successor). Nor, on the other hand, will this small symbolic step turn the Windsors from a stuffy, horse-drawn, quasi-imperial, knee-breeched organization into a modern, open, accountable, bicycling monarchy all set to greet the twenty-first century.

Her Majesty is currently being investigated by an élite squad of tax inspectors based in the northern suburbs of Cardiff. Norman Lamont is currently being investigated by Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, who knew nothing of the concealed forty-seven-hundred-pound payment and is deciding whether or not it can be justified under Cabinet Office rules. Mr. Lamont in his continuing difficulties has once more engaged Peter Carter-Ruck & Partners to act for him, and the firm is demanding apologies—plus, no doubt, impressive lawyers' fees—from half a dozen newspapers. This time, we are assured, Mr. Carter-Ruck's bill is to be met from Mr. Lamont's own pocket. And presumably he won't try using his credit card. ♦

Canada's system is a sad joke. Simple office visits are easy to get but you will die waiting for surgery. Canadians cross the border for life-threatening medical treatment.—*Letter to California Aggie, student newspaper of the University of California at Davis.*

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ANNALS OF POLITICAL TERROR

BURYING THE MARTYRS

by Mary Anne Weaver

OUTSIDE Akaki Prison, in central Addis Ababa, one rainy July dawn, some thirty women stood huddled under umbrellas, waiting to be searched by a prison guard. A dog moved among them and sniffed at their feet. Most of the women were members of the Ethiopian royal family or of the nobility. All were dressed in black, and some wore veils. They wore no jewelry except tiny gold crosses hanging discreetly on gold chains.

The last time the women saw the prison, they had been prisoners themselves—held hostage by the Marxist military dictatorship that overthrew Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. For thirteen years, members of the Emperor's family—including Princess Tenagne Worq, his only surviving daughter; her four daughters; and the Emperor's daughter-in-law—had shared a ten-by-twelve-foot concrete prison cell. Next to them, separated only by a wall, a hundred or so women of his imperial court slept on mattresses on a damp concrete floor. They had been charged with no crime, and were offered no promise of release. Even today, no one knows why they were arrested.

I joined the line as it slowly began to move. A small group of beggars appeared from a bus stop across the street, jostling and pushing, jabbing stumps of arms close to the women's faces. After the women had been searched, they entered the prison complex through a red metal gate. Hammer-and-sickles and tattered red flags hung from barbed wire on top of the prison walls. The women walked arm in arm across a muddy field that smelled of open sewers. A billboard proclaimed "Long Live the International Proletariat." Male prisoners stared out from a recreation yard. The women kept silent and looked straight ahead.

A stony path led through a complex of squat, tin-roofed stucco buildings that had long ago been painted in bleak shades of ochre, gray, and green. The royal party paused outside a corrugated-iron gate with two huge padlocks. Inside was the crumbling barracks where the women of the imperial court had been held. Female guards lounged in the courtyard, holding clubs. From the barred windows, faces began to appear—the faces of women prisoners, their eyes darting right and left. We approached a lofty pale-blue structure with peeling paint. It resembled a Victorian watchtower, with spires and parapets, but it was actually a prison within a prison, built by Mussolini's occupation forces more than fifty years ago—a maze of catacombs and underground cages known as the End of the World.

Princess Sara Gizau, Haile Selassie's daughter-in-law, stopped to look more closely. She was once one of the most beautiful women in the Emperor's court—tall, slender, and erect, with dark, flashing eyes and hair often tied in a ponytail. Her late husband, Prince Makonnen, was the second of the Emperor's three sons, and was his favorite, and she had always hoped that their son Prince Beeide Mariam would one day assume the throne. He was doted on by the Emperor, everyone told me, and was one of his favorite grandsons. Then, at the age of fifteen, he was sent to the End of the World. His arrest warrant had been signed by Haile Selassie himself. From her cell, in the women's section of the prison, Princess Sara had been unable to see the End of the World. She had only heard that three of her five young sons were being held there in solitary confinement. She was not permitted to see them for eight years.

"*Woizero Rahel!*" a voice shouted in greeting, and we turned around. A thin, hunched woman, her eyes partly blinded by cataracts, approached one of the women and embraced her. "She made coffee for us in prison," the woman, Rahel Mesfin, explained to me. "She also carried messages for us, hidden in her bra."

Rahel had become, in a way, my eyes and ears as she led me by the hand into the closed circle of royal and noble women, to which outsiders had rarely had access before. She was the daughter of Ras Mesfin Sileshi, who was the equivalent of a duke in the Emperor's court. A strikingly attractive woman in her late forties, with deep, wide-set eyes, she had been imprisoned for nearly eight years, with two of her sisters and her mother, Lady Yeshimmabet Guma, who is now seventy-six.

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MARY ANNE WEAVER

Rahel had returned to Addis from the United States for the first time since her release, accompanying her mother. Lady Yeshimmabet now stood next to me, holding my arm. In age, position, and stature, she was the ranking woman present from the old imperial court.

A few nights before, she had shown me faded, tinted photographs of her husband in his ceremonial dress. He was an immensely handsome and immensely wealthy man, and he had passed through the pages of modern Ethiopian history exercising control with a firm, sometimes feared, hand: as a patriot who fought the Italian occupiers, as a lieutenant general, as a governor, and as a feudal landlord whose holdings were vast.

Women came forward and bowed and kissed Lady Yeshimmabet's cheeks or her hand, among them a woman of exceptional grace. She was Princess Rebecca Asrate Kassa, a great-granddaughter of the late Empress, and she came from a long imperial line. Many scholars have considered her grandfather, the venerable Ras Kassa, a more legitimate heir to the throne than Emperor Haile Selassie was. But Haile Selassie was far better versed in court politics and intrigue, and Ras Kassa, a deeply religious man, quietly stepped aside. Her father, Prince Asrate Kassa, was considered a potential contender for the throne, and, after the Emperor, was for a time the most powerful man in the kingdom.

The procession stopped briefly at an area encircled by green stakes and barbed wire. "That's the visitors' area," Princess Rebecca said. "But, of course, we weren't permitted visitors when we were here."

In a tiny courtyard outside the prison chapel, a crowd of perhaps two hundred people were waiting—friends, relatives, former prisoners, servants, wardens, guards. A cross tacked to the chapel's roof swayed gently in the breeze. A faded icon of Christ was taped to a nearby tree. For a few minutes, the royal women seemed to hesitate: to go into the chapel, where a prayer vigil had just begun, was, in a sense, to confront their ghosts.

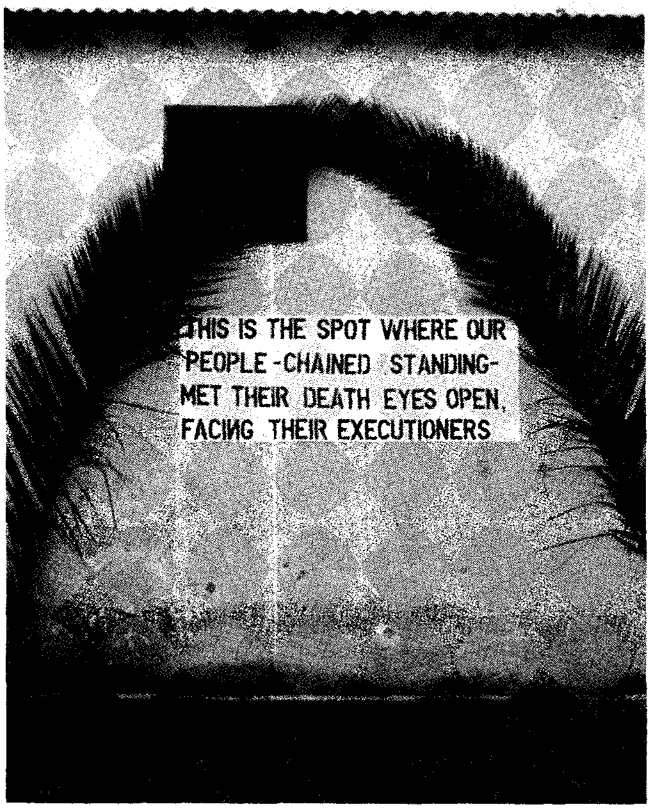
In November of 1974, fifty-six male members of Haile Selassie's court—including Rahel's father, Princess Rebecca's father, and seven of their relatives—were summarily executed inside the prison, without charges or trial, and were buried on its grounds. Three young soldiers who refused to join the firing squad were also killed. For eighteen years, the women had known that their loved ones were dead, but they hadn't known where or how they died. No one had told them—not their jailers, not their lawyers, and not members of the ruling military junta, which was known as the Dergue.

The leader of the Dergue, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, was a five-foot-three-inch ordnance officer known as the Black Stalin of Africa: he was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of his countrymen. But the fifty-six noblemen from the imperial court, executed inside Akaki, had been the first. They ranged in age from thirty-two to seventy, and included most of the ranking male members of the court: four princes and eighteen generals; dukes; ministers and former premiers; a grandson of Haile Selassie and one of his sons-in-law. Nearly all their arrest warrants had been signed by the Emperor himself.

Now the women had returned to Addis to bury their dead. An official funeral for sixty-five noblemen—nine of whom had been executed outside Akaki—and the three soldiers would take place in Trinity Cathedral the following day, July 27th. The bodies had been discovered only a few months before—in some cases, only a few weeks before—by Ethiopia's new, transitional government, made up largely of a guerrilla army from the north, which had overthrown the Mengistu junta in the summer of 1991.

As the women filed into the chapel, I walked across the prison grounds with Rahel's younger sister, Tiruayer, who is forty-three. When the revolution began, she had been a student at Bowling Green State University and had returned home, fearing for her father's life. After her release from prison, she was the only one of Ras Mesfin's daughters to remain in Addis, instead of going into exile. Now, pointing to a grassy meadow, she said, "That was the recreational area during the time of our imprisonment." We approached a beige building that housed the prison's electric chair. Beyond it, looming above us just outside the prison wall, in an affluent suburban neighborhood, was the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity, or O.A.U.

Late one night nearly twenty years ago, two prison trucks carrying the men of the Emperor's court had stopped where we now stood, on a muddy track in front of the building containing the electric chair. The prisoners were taken out of the trucks ten at a time. Then, chained together by their wrists and arms in groups of four, they were lined up


THIS IS THE SPOT WHERE OUR
PEOPLE-CHAINED STANDING-
MET THEIR DEATH EYES OPEN,
FACING THEIR EXECUTIONERS

The royal funeral in Addis Ababa last July (opposite), and the firing-squad wall in Akaki Prison, where fifty-six men from Haile Selassie's court were the first of many thousands to die under Colonel Mengistu's rule.

against the wall. Their executioners, who were masked, stood in a trench and fired. Each prisoner was shot at least six times. It is said that someone took pictures of the executions from the top floor of the O.A.U. (The whole area is illuminated by powerful stadium lights mounted on concrete pylons.) Six Dergue officers sat in a parked car, on a knoll in the recreational field. They drank whiskey, and communicated with the executioners by hand-held radios. After the executions, the bodies were dragged over stone and rubble and piled one on top of another in a hastily bulldozed pit. They were then covered with lime.

"I remember once, when we were in prison, we used to point to a trumpet flower in this very field and wonder if this is where they were," Tiruayer said. "When we came back to exhume the bodies, it seemed so unreal. At first, we saw a bone coming out, then shoes, and more bones. It was at that moment that I finally believed that my father had been killed." She turned her head away momentarily. "My mother always hoped that he'd worn his cross when he died, or his chipped glasses, so that we could identify him if his body was ever found."

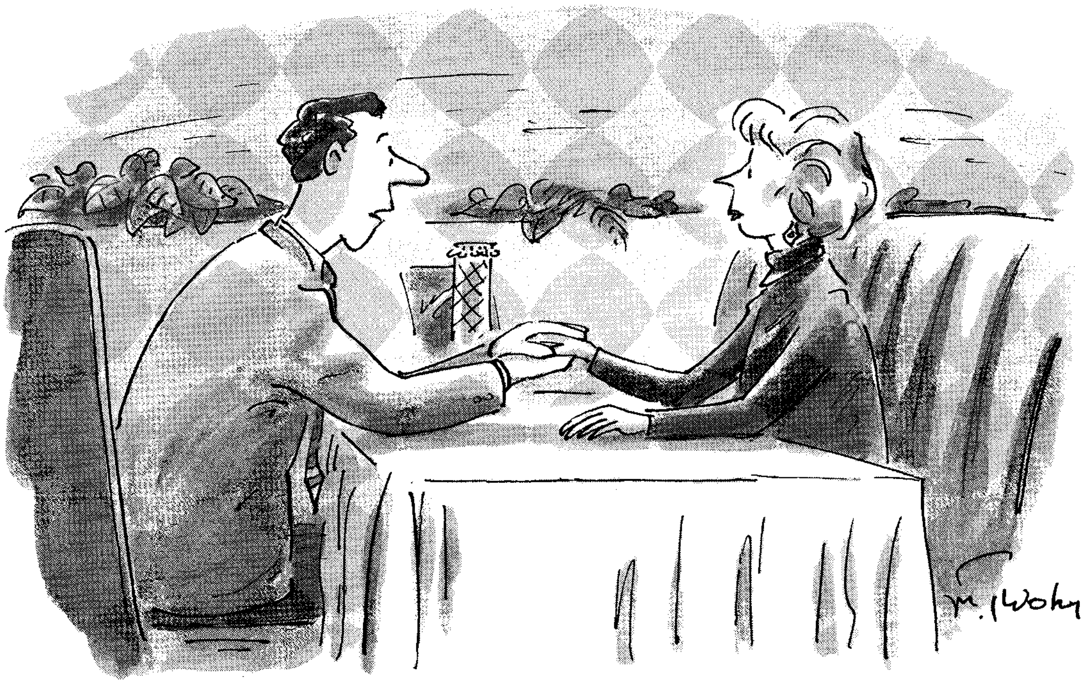
The place where the bodies were found is now a memorial site. Fig trees have been planted there, and, a few feet beyond, a field of trumpet flowers. "Just in case they demolish the monument," Tiruayer said, "the trees and the flowers will always tell us where they died."

There was a bit of a stir as several priests, with crowns on their heads, shuffled toward us across the field, accompanied by bearers who held crimson parasols, trimmed with sequins and golden tassels, above the priests' heads. The mourners followed, some three hundred or so—mostly women, who walked ten or twelve abreast. The priests' gold and purple vestments and their bright parasols contrasted sharply with the sea of mourning black. Some of the women wept, others ululated, but most only stared. In a ceremony of blessing, the priests began chanting, and puffs of incense filled the air.

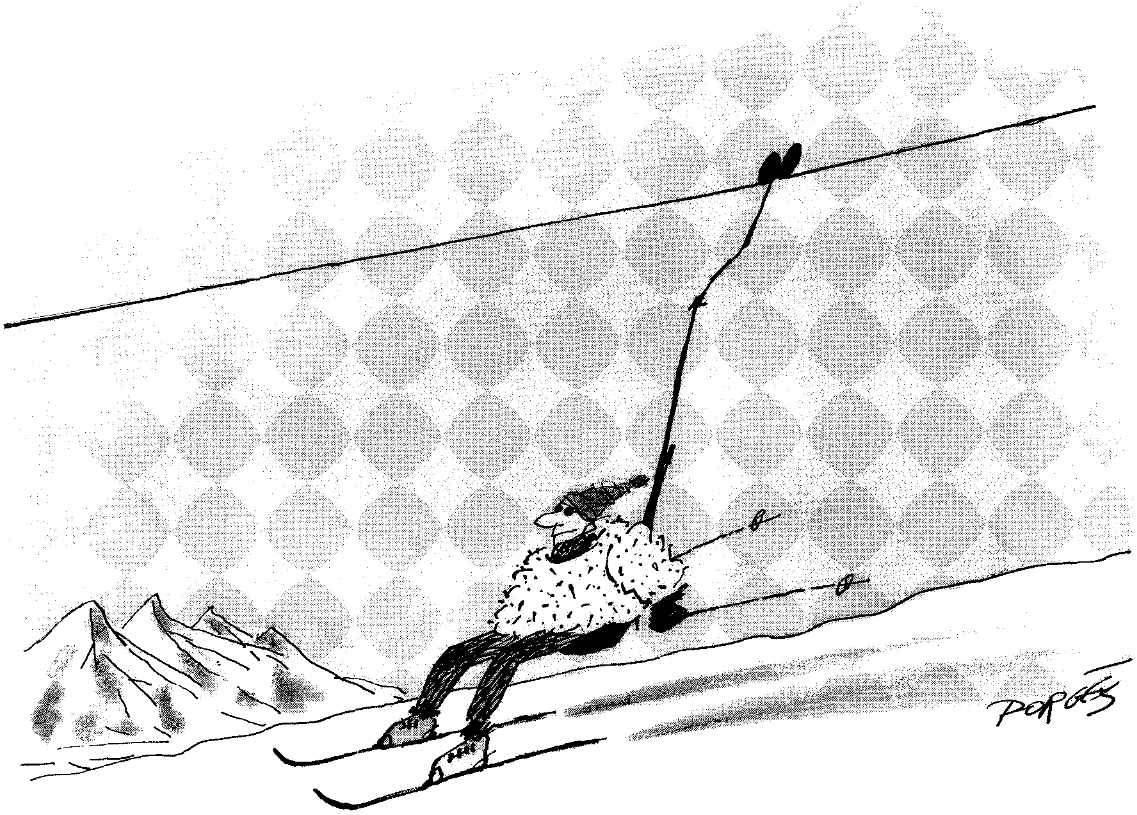
When the ceremony was over, Rahel, Princess Rebecca, and I walked back toward the entrance gate. As we neared the center of the prison, we heard cheers, then shouts. It was Sunday, the prison's visiting day, and the thieves and murderers who lived there now stood in the enclosed area—the area that the princesses had never been permitted to enter—shouting to their families over the heads of their guards.

THE central part of Haile Selassie's empire—the old Kingdom of Abyssinia—is a high plateau, towering some ten thousand feet above sea level, and marked by isolated valleys and deep volcanic rifts. A light-skinned, thin-lipped ethnic group known as the Amharas dominated the highlands—and the courts of the empire—for hundreds of years. They were in the minority, but they presided over a disparate collection of what were, in effect, principalities: desperately poor regions populated by some eighty ethnic and linguistic groups, all consisting mostly of peasants, living amid their goats and cattle in conical mud-and-thatch huts known as *tukuls*. The kingdom's mountain fastness and its altitude had to a large extent guaranteed its isolation, and for centuries it remained an impregnable feudal realm, largely cut off from the world. According to legend, it was founded in the tenth century B.C. by Emperor Menelik I, the offspring of the legendary seduction of the Queen of Sheba by King Solomon. The first kingdom for which there is documentary evidence, however, is that of the court of Aksum, in Tigre Province, in the north, which probably dates from the first century A.D. and is generally considered to be Ethiopia's historical core. Tigre is also home to the guerrilla army that now rules in Addis Ababa. Like the Amharas, the Tigreans have clung with special force to the history that defines their identity: their glittering, ancient seat of power and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which is one of the oldest branches of Christianity.

Historically, both groups were barriers against the spread of Islam: since the fourth century A.D., Christianity has flourished in Ethiopia's central highlands. Islamic incursions were primarily along the Red Sea coast, in the northern province of Eritrea, and into the more accessible regions of the south, most notably among the Oromos—Ethiopia's largest tribe—and nomadic Somalian groups. Until recent years, Christians and Muslims coexisted relatively happily, but during Haile Selassie's reign the demographics began to change. Mus-


"Love comes and goes, Janet, but this is true co-dependency!"

lims now make up some fifty per cent of the population—half of which is under the age of twenty-one and knows little of the Emperor and his old imperial court.



On the basis of his lineage from the House of David—he was generally considered to be the two hundred and twenty-fifth in line—Haile Selassie assumed the throne in 1930, after serving as regent for fifteen years, and almost immediately set about bringing his backward, feudal nation into the modern age. He built schools, railways, and roads, and promulgated a constitution. And, of course, he will always be remembered for his impassioned appearance before the League of Nations in 1936, when he appealed in vain for Allied assistance to drive Mussolini's army of occupation out of Ethiopia.

In the later years of his reign, however, there was growing discord over the gap between the immense wealth of the feudal aristocracy and the extreme poverty of the rest of Ethiopia. By the beginning of 1974, the aging Emperor, whose once formidable mental powers had begun to slip, found himself on a collision course with students at Haile Selassie University and with the lower ranks of the armed forces—particularly of the Army.

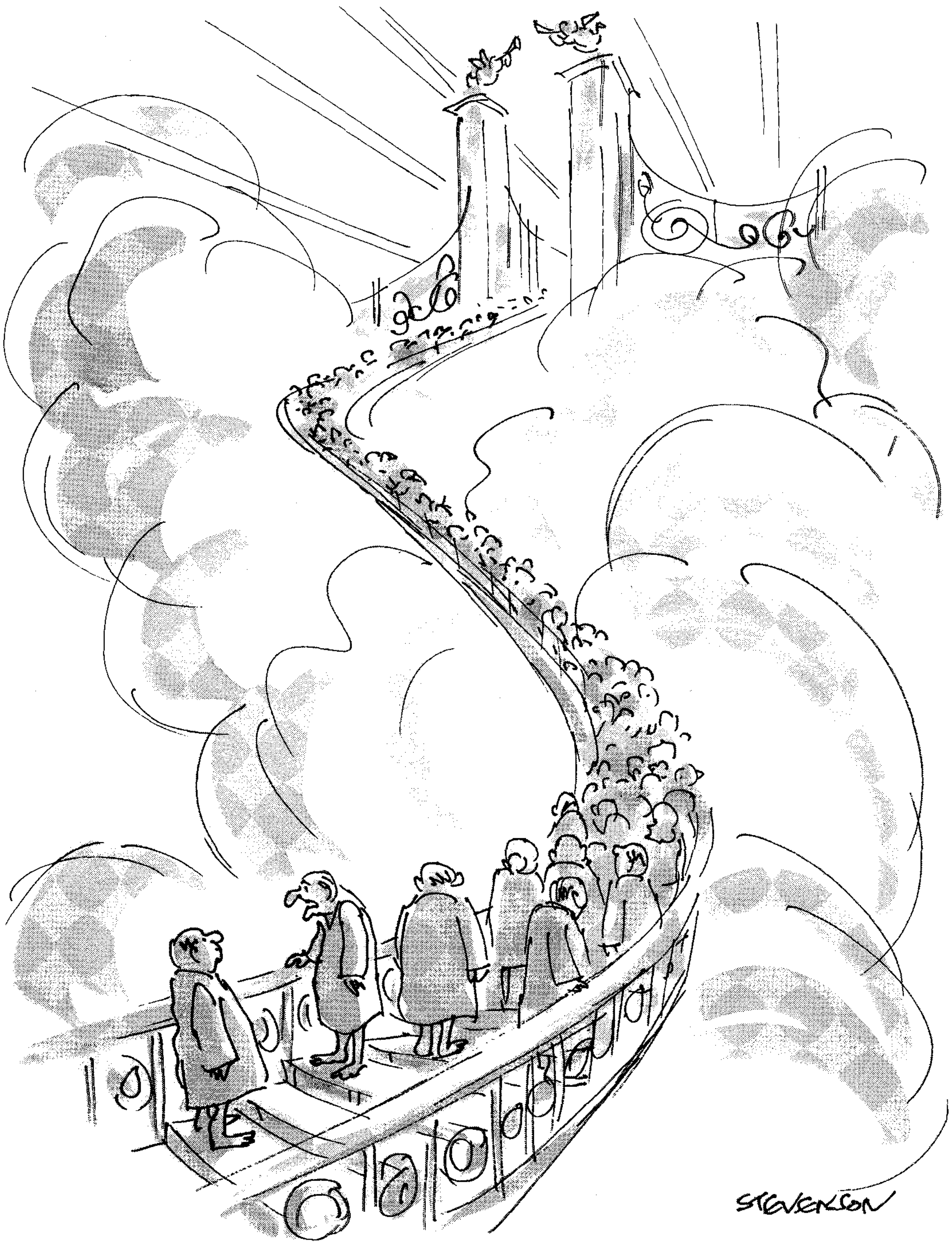
For a generation, the greatest problems in Ethiopia had been land tenure and reform, and they became rallying cries. In 1973, a famine in Wollo and other northern provinces cost at least a hundred thousand lives, and the government's mishandling of it sent thousands of Ethiopians into the streets. Their protests coincided with the quadrupling of oil prices after the October war in the Middle East; inflation spiralled, and there were shortages of everything. It was the stuff of revolution. The days when Haile Selassie could rule Ethiopia through an imperial court, reminiscent of that of Louis XIV, were clearly gone.

Students and teachers, joined by railway workers, dockers, and taxi-drivers—even officials of the Emperor's own institutions, which he regarded as little more than imperial toys—clamored for reform, demonstrated, and went on strike. In the Army, mutiny followed mutiny, and in June of 1974 rebellious junior officers and noncommissioned men established a national committee representing the kingdom's three services: it was called the Armed Forces Coördinating Committee, and was known as the Dergue (Amharic for "committee"). It was always a shadowy organization, and its membership changed dramatically over the years. At the start, it numbered some hundred and twenty; its highest ranks were held by majors, but it consisted mostly of enlisted men. Power shifted quickly to a complete unknown—Major Mengistu Haile Mariam.

The revolution was initially bloodless. It began as if in slow motion, and proceeded cautiously. The empire's most powerful men—members of the royal family, the nobility, the hierarchy of the armed forces, Parliament, and the courts—were rounded up. Haile Selassie's daughter and granddaughters and the noblewomen of his imperial court watched, bewildered and confused, as their husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons were taken away. Then, one by one—permitted to take only a single blanket and suitcase each—they, too, were imprisoned. For more than a decade, a radio was their only contact with the outside world.

In September of 1974, the Emperor himself, still proud and hawk-faced, was whisked from the Grand Palace in a Volkswagen and imprisoned in a three-room mud hut. He was subsequently returned to the palace, where he spent the last year of his life sharing a small apartment with his valet of many years. They were two old men wandering the empty halls of an abandoned palace, Haile Selassie dressed in his field marshal's uniform and carrying his marshal's baton. Some hundred and fifty members of his imperial court—including those who were subsequently executed at Akaki—were imprisoned just below, in the damp, unventilated basement of the Grand Banquet Hall.

RAS MESFIN'S former estate, in the northern suburbs of Addis, was only a thirty-minute drive from my ho-



"They say the computer is down."

tel, and I accompanied Rahel there one afternoon. Like all such property, the estate had been confiscated by the Dergue, then handed over to Cuban soldiers, and later to peasants, who lived there now. We entered through the first of two sculptured iron gates, then lurched and jolted down what was once a private drive, careering around boulders and dislodged asphalt blocks, toward a decaying plantation-style home, which had belonged to the man who was considered to be the second richest in the Emperor's court. It reminded me a little of the Kennedy family compound in Hyannis Port, but perhaps that was because Ras Mesfin's family struck me as being in many respects the Ethiopian counterpart of the Kennedy clan—they possessed the same spirit, and had enjoyed the same power and wealth. The Duke had thirteen sons and daughters. They were taught to swim, shoot, and ride; they played football on Sundays; and they seemed capable of withstanding almost any personal tragedy. The family was now presided over by Ras Mesfin's widow, Lady Yeshimmabet Guma, a woman of formidable strength.

I followed Rahel around the compound as she pointed out the sights. At times, her exuberance seemed extraordinary. She had been a social worker at the time of her arrest, and had entered and left Akaki Prison with her sense of humor intact.

Some four hundred and fifty people, including servants and guards, had been living here, she told me, when armed troops came to arrest her father, in June of 1974. Ras Mesfin had been one of only two members of the old imperial court to resist: as two hundred and fifty soldiers, five armored personnel carriers, and forty jeeps, with machine guns mounted on them, ground through the gates, his sons and his private army fanned out across the estate; his servants, armed with AK-47s, scampered up into the trees. For twenty-four hours, they held off a division of the Dergue, until the patriarch of the family slipped away. He left the estate through a back gate and spent the next two weeks living underground, with an old servant, in a simple Addis neighborhood. Only his sons and Haile Selassie knew where he was: he kept in touch with the Emperor by phone. Then, one evening, the Emperor summoned him to the Grand Palace.

"We thought the Emperor was finally going to resist the Dergue," Rahel's brother Yohannes told me later, recalling that night. "My father and a number of other generals had repeatedly asked the Emperor to do something, but he had always responded 'Wait.' Everyone was totally confused. He had the entire hierarchy of the armed forces behind him, and the imperial bodyguard, but he simply sat silent—did nothing—as, one by one, his officers and ministers were carted off.

"Two of my brothers and I went with my father to the palace that evening, and at the time the imperial bodyguard was still with the Emperor, and it was very strong. The moment we entered the palace gates, however, we knew that something was wrong. Tanks were scattered about the courtyard, and all protocol had disappeared. Ministers were in the reception area crying. Someone told us that one of the Emperor's grandsons—Rear Admiral Iskender Desta, the commander of the Navy—was about to be placed under arrest. Another grandson, who was much younger, rushed up to my father and cried, 'What's happening? Grandpa is senile!'

"The Emperor was waiting for us on the second floor, and, as a sign of respect, my brothers and I left our weapons downstairs. My father, however, retained his Second World War revolver, and the four of us walked up the marble stairs. We found the Emperor standing in the center of his drawing room, wearing all of his medals and his field marshal's uniform. He smiled weakly at my father, and then they embraced. No one else was present except the commander of the imperial bodyguard.

" 'What are we waiting for?' my father asked the Emperor. 'There is no one whom you have brought up who would not die for you.'

"The Emperor responded, 'You must surrender for there to be peace.'

"The audience lasted for some twenty minutes, but except for this one remark the Emperor stood mute, a strange expression on his face.

"My father said, 'History is my witness. I give my hand to the King.' And he handed him his revolver. The Emperor looked blank. Then my father was taken by the chief of the imperial bodyguard and was driven away in a Mercedes flying the Emperor's flag. Before he got into the car, he said to me, 'I don't want your mother ever to see me in prison.' And she never did. In fact, she never saw him again."

As the Emperor remained under house arrest in the Grand Palace, patrols from the Dergue arrived each day and, little by little, carted off antique tapestries and Oriental rugs, boxes of jewelry, crystal chandeliers, jewelled crowns and sceptres, and whatever cash they could find. They read proclamations, charging the Emperor with the illegal appropriation of hundreds of millions of dollars—half a billion, according to some accounts—in his nearly sixty years on the throne. The allegations have never been fully tested or proved, and, despite an investigation of nearly twenty years, the money—if it exists—has never been found. In August of 1975, eleven months after he was dethroned, the man believed by many of his subjects to be immortal was dead. Presumably, his captors had smothered him with a pillow doused in ether as he slept. His body was discovered only ten months ago—on the grounds of the Grand Palace, buried three metres beneath Colonel Mengistu's desk.

As I wandered around Addis late one afternoon—passing burned-out tanks abandoned along the roads, and chatting with groups of exceedingly young and rather bedraggled-looking Tigrean rebels who now rule the empire—the layers of the 1974 revolution seemed sometimes distinct, sometimes blurred. Statues of Mengistu were still standing in some parks, and his portraits were still hanging in some shops, but his vast showcase project, Revolution Square, was largely deserted, except for some homeless men and some shoeshine boys playing kickball. It was here that the Lilliputian Mengistu (he always wore platform shoes) would harangue the people in rambling speeches of five hours or more, his high-pitched voice shrieking, his clenched fist raised in a black-power salute. But, for all the trappings of power with which he surrounded himself, not much is actually known about Mengistu's life. Even those who knew him told me that he never talked about himself.

He was thirty-two—or perhaps thirty-five—and a major in the Third Army Division when the revolution took place. His mother worked as a servant for a noble family, and he may have been the illegitimate son of an influential member of the court, or he may have been the legitimate son of an enlisted man—his official biographies do not agree on where he was born or into which tribe. He shows little trace of the aquiline features of the Amhara élite. Twice—in 1963 and in 1969—he was sent to the United States for mili-

"Isn't it about time for a salvo from Alan Greenspan?"

tary training, and the story is often told that he was beaten up once, or perhaps twice, by a mob of white youths in Maryland. This could have been the reason, or a skillfully manipulated excuse, for his subsequent hatred of all things American.

He held power for seventeen years, during which he organized innumerable massacres. There were countercoups and palace shoot-outs, atrocities and firing squads. From 1976 to 1978, in a campaign known as the Red Terror, the Dergue executed thousands of political opponents, and neighborhood vigilantes shot down children in the streets.

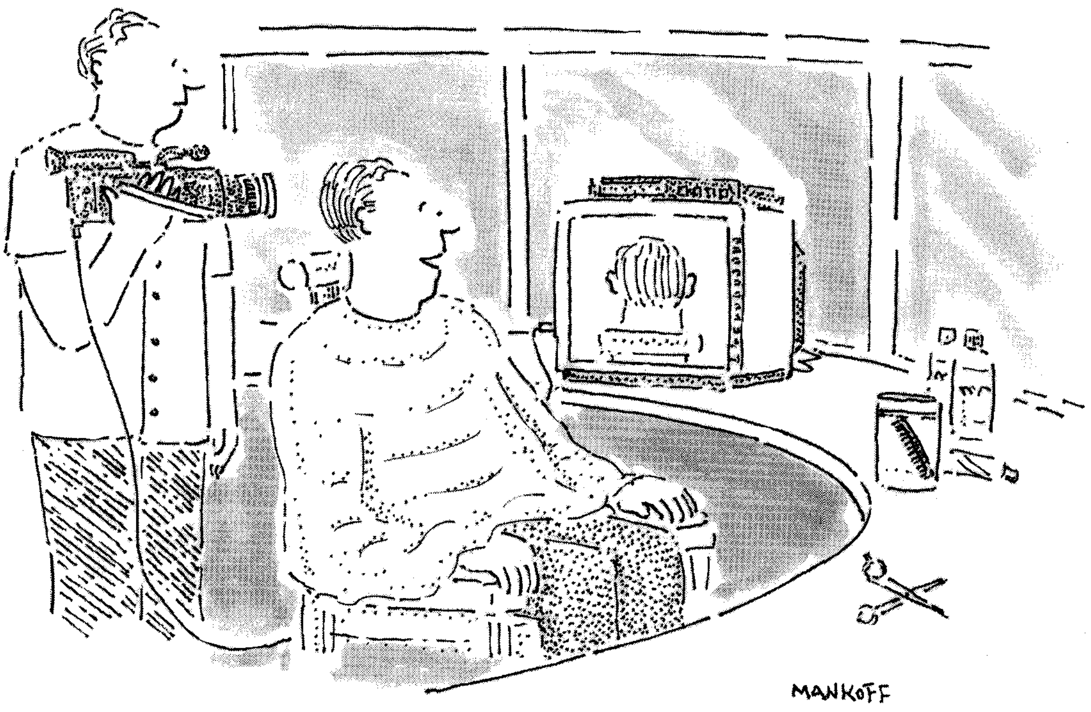
Addis became a city of rumor and fear, where few ventured out after dusk. By midafternoon, the crackle of gunfire could already be heard. A hundred or so people died every night, and the residents of Addis abandoned their city to packs of dogs, and to vultures, which had become a common sight, perched on the walls of the Grand Palace.

Ethiopians describe Mengistu variously as a monster and as a patriot, as a nationalist gone mad and as a product of the imperial system, where power was the only currency. Some say that he was not totally evil, and that he could be gracious, even humorous, at times. He had a disconcerting twitch in his cheek, everyone agrees, and his eyes dilated in a most unusual way. But, even now, no one seems to have a real measure of the man. He certainly lacked a clearcut ideology: he once fashioned himself after Stalin, then after Mao Zedong, and, in one fanciful moment, after the rulers of Albania. He appeared to become increasingly deranged as the years went by, and he shored up his power with Soviet military backing, homegrown Marxism, and medieval cruelty. He sent sixty thousand students on the *zamacha*—forced marches into the countryside, where they were ordered to teach reading, writing, and "rural regeneration" to the peasantry. Some of the peasants had no wish to be regenerated, and some of the students, including sons of the noblewomen, never returned. He nationalized everything in the country, transforming vast, unproductive private estates into vast, unproductive state farms. Farmers who stored food from a good harvest were charged with hoarding, and were shot. Merchants who bought food in areas where there was a surplus for sale in districts suffering from drought were charged with profiteering, and they, too, were shot. Mengistu was known to possess an iron will. In 1974, a secessionist guerrilla army from Eritrea kidnapped his wife and children, attempting to win concessions on autonomy from the Dergue, and he is said to have responded to their demands by saying, "Kill them if you want."

THE Grand Palace is a great jumble of buildings in the center of Addis, dominating one of its seven hills; high walls encircle it, shielding most of it from public view. One afternoon, when Princess Rebecca, Rahel, and I drove by—we were not permitted to stop—all we could see was the towering tops of cedars and lacy gray eucalyptus trees, an occasional cracked driveway or broken marble bust, and, from time to time, a spacious lawn, where the Emperor's pet lions used to roam. The lofty iron gates had long ago been shorn of their imperial designs and now, like much of official Addis, were graced with the hammer-and-sickle, and, here and there, with faded revolutionary flags. Tanks and jeeps with guns mounted on them were visible in the courtyard, but it was difficult to tell if they were in offensive or defensive positions. They appeared to have simply been dropped there, in no obvious pattern. Mengistu, like the Emperor, had reigned from the palace, and had taken particular delight in spending as much time as possible ensconced in Haile Selassie's hand-carved red velvet throne, dangling his tiny feet.

Rahel and Rebecca grimaced slightly at the thought. They were cousins and had been friends since childhood; they had played together in the palace's gilded halls. They had attended the best universities and schools. They had then spent nearly a decade together in Akaki Prison, on opposite sides of a wall.

"It wasn't so bad at the beginning," Princess Rebecca said later, as she told me the story of her imprisonment. We were sitting in the drawing room of one of her friends, where other women of the court were drawing up guest lists for the royal funeral. "During the first



"Fine—now pan around to the front."

year, we were under house arrest, and we were all held together, mostly at Princess Sara's house. There were about twenty of us. They had come for us at six o'clock in the morning, three hours before the Emperor was placed under arrest. They said it was for our own protection; and this was the line they took—with every single human-rights organization—until we were released. For me, that happened exactly nine years later—nine years to the day. On our release papers—and you must realize how important these papers were; we needed them, since we had to account for eight, nine, fourteen years of our lives—the reason for our imprisonment was that we were 'suspected of being a stumbling block to the revolution.' That was our crime. In other words, it was preventive detention—we were hostages of the Dergue."

HAPPY NEW
Dana Fradon

"Well, one more minute and the goddam year of the woman will be over."

• •

She stopped to light a cigarette, and studied the room. She had spent a quarter of her life in prison—she was now thirty-nine, and had been arrested at twenty-one, after returning home from University College, London, where she had been studying international relations. The revolution had begun in Addis earlier that year, and she had feared that her father would be imprisoned soon, so, against his very determined wishes, she had come back. Within five months, her father, Prince Asrate Kassa, was dead.

I asked Princess Rebecca how she had learned of his death.

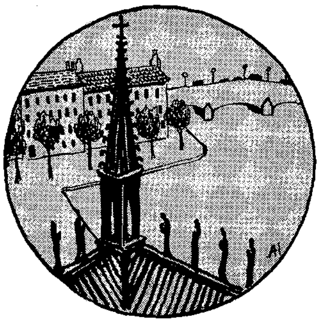
She didn't answer immediately. Then she said, "We knew that something was wrong. Three days earlier, they had come to Princess Sara's and taken the radios and the television away. The morning after the executions, some of our guards, thinking we were still asleep, turned on their radio in the kitchen, and my little brother, who was upstairs, opened his window and listened in. He heard the official announcement on Ethiopia Radio. I'll never forget his screams—'They've killed them all! They've killed them all!' For a long time, he wasn't able to say anything else.

"The soldiers rushed into the library, where we had gathered, and told us that it wasn't true—that the men were going to be put on trial. We were bewildered. We didn't know what to believe. For the next twenty-four hours, although the rest of the country knew, we were left in total uncertainty. Then, the following morning, six Dergue officers arrived. We have ways in Ethiopia of relaying bad news—we try to cushion the blow. But they made the announcement as though they were on the radio. They gave us the names of only seven, who they thought were our relatives; there were, in fact, sixteen. We tried to appeal to them—to their sense of compassion, if you like. We said we should at least go and bury them—thinking that they would return the bodies to the families. We said we would go under armed guard. We were told, quite rudely, that there would be no funeral, nor would they allow us to go to our families and mourn. Then they raised their AK-47s and pointed them at our heads. We were ordered to stop crying. 'It's anti-revolutionary to cry,' they said."

Everyone in the drawing room was silent, then Rebecca went on, "It was at that moment that the bad part began. I think they wanted to kill us, too. It's as simple as that." The princesses learned some time later that their lives were saved only by the intervention of the British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, the United Nations, and the British Royal Family. "It was in early September of 1975, exactly a week after the Emperor was killed, that they came to Princess Sara's house and told the women to pack. We were by then eleven people. The young princes had already been taken—we didn't know where. So we packed small suitcases, and then waited all day. Finally, at five that evening, a bus arrived. Even the driver didn't know where we were going; he had been told to follow a car. As we boarded the bus, a cadre told us that we couldn't take our suitcases after all. 'Where we are taking you, you don't need anything,' he said. I was certain that that was the end."

The eleven princesses were driven in an Army bus from Princess Sara's palace to Akaki Prison and were marched to the open field just beyond the building with the electric chair—the field where Rebecca's father and Princess Tenagne Worq's son had been executed nine months before. For four hours, the princesses remained in the open field. They had no suitcases, only the clothes they wore; they spread their cardigans on the ground so that they could sit. Meanwhile, Callaghan and the United Nations negotiated for their lives.

Among the prisoners were the Emperor's octogenarian cousin, Princess Yashasha Worq, and his strong-willed sixty-two-year-old daughter, Princess Tenagne Worq, who had wielded enormous influence behind the throne. Both women had led highly protected lives inside the imperial court, moving with calm assurance through its unchanging world of gold braid and curtsies, concubines and tiger shoots, ascetics, priests, and ancestral oaths. Also among the prisoners were Princess Rebecca's mother, Princess Zuriash, and Princess Tenagne Worq's daughters—Aida, Seble, Sofie, and Hiruth. They had all attended Clarendon School, in North Wales, and two had gone on to Cambridge and Oxford; when they returned home, they had become schoolmistresses or had done charitable work. There was also Princess Igegayehu, the daughter of the Emperor's only surviving son. She would die behind Akaki's walls.



"From time to time, male prisoners approached us," Princess Rebecca said. "Some of them were quite sympathetic. The eleven of us were sitting on our cardigan sweaters in the dark, in an open field, waiting to be shot, and the prisoners were asking us if there was anything they could do. There were others who jeered at us from afar, but most of them came out of curiosity. We were like a bloody zoo!

"It seemed endless. Then, finally, at ten o'clock, a car drove up, and a Dergue member got out. 'Put them in with the women,' he told our guards. We thus had the distinction of becoming the first female political prisoners under the Dergue. What a mess it was. What *you* saw at Akaki was luxury compared with what it was then. In those days, it was impossible to walk—there were just stones and boulders and wet, slippery mud. I grabbed hold of Princess Yashasha Worq—she must have been over eighty, but she was feisty and would never tell us her age—and we stumbled along until we reached the gate. Then they searched us. You can't imagine what they wouldn't allow: cigarettes, my glasses, mirrors, chewing gum. They made us hand over our jewelry: Princess Yashasha Worq flatly refused. I was terrified that they were going to shoot her. But she was determined, and she finally won.

"Then they took us to the women's quarters. In the dark, it looked like a mausoleum, the way the moonlight struck its roof. The first thing that hit us was the stench. Then the weirdness—all these women in dirty blue uniforms, with shaved heads. At first, there was an awful silence—no one said a word. Then one of the prisoners took off her blanket and tentatively offered it to my mother. Then others offered us their extra mattresses, or shared their meagre food. Some of them got down on their hands and knees and tried to clean the hole in the ground—the Turkish toilet, it was called. It was the first kindness we had seen all day, and we were overwhelmed.

"Nevertheless, this was also our first contact with hard-core criminals. We were desperately exhausted, and so wanted to sleep, but we had a family council and decided we had to have guards. We really thought we'd be murdered in our sleep. Princess Sara found a tin can, and that was our warning signal. If anything happened during the night, the princess on guard duty was to beat on this can. How we were to defend ourselves against these criminals, God only knows. But we were absolutely determined that we were not going to be murdered in our sleep."

As Princess Rebecca spoke, a servant sat on a straw mat in a far corner of the drawing room, surrounded by rose petals and ferns. She lit sticks of incense—to keep the evil spirits away, Rebecca and Rahel explained. Then she began the ceremony of roasting coffee beans. It was the traditional ceremony of welcome, which had been practiced in Ethiopia for hundreds of years. Even in prison, the noblewomen performed it when they could. And to maintain their sanity, Rahel told me, they danced—and danced.

Eventually, the princesses were separated from the murderers and thieves, and were held in a tiny room, the former prison clinic, just on the other side of the wall. They had no furniture except mattresses, which relatives had brought them from home. The mattresses were their dining table and exercise area, as well as the place where they slept. Their world had shrunk to a space of ten feet by twelve. The cell had no running water, and they bathed, when they could, from large barrels, in the open air, behind the prison block. They had only one toilet—another hole in the ground—and only one light, a bare ceiling bulb, which was never extinguished. If the Dergue had a purpose in mind, it was apparently to humiliate Haile Selassie's family.

From the other side of the wall, the princesses began to hear familiar voices. With each passing day, more and more women of the Emperor's court arrived. But the princesses were not permitted to speak to them. They were totally isolated, for months, for years.

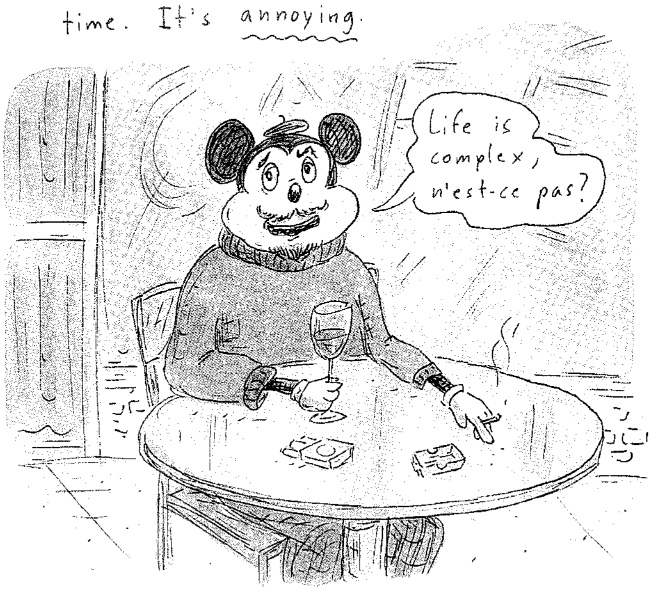
"Once a year, every year, they would take us to the administrative office," Rebecca said. "One at a time. They asked us only one question for all those years: 'Where is the Emperor's money?' They were obsessed by it."

What most surprised Rebecca was that the daily routine—making morning coffee, battling fleas or killing rats, disinfecting the cell, lining its floor and walls with newspapers and wringing the moisture out, marching across the compound once a day, under the watchful eyes of their guards—became the most reassuring part of the princesses' prison lives.

Early each summer, the royal women

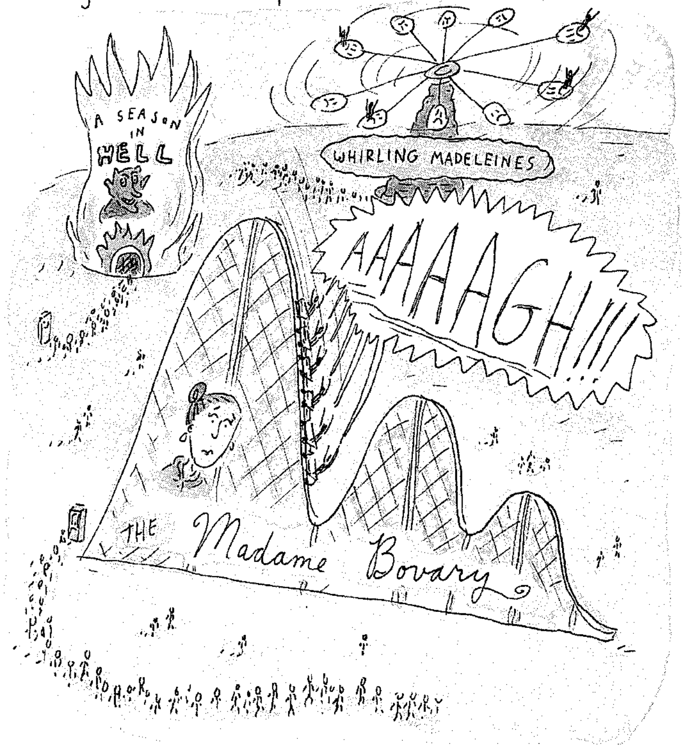
HOW TO BAIL OUT

EuroDisney



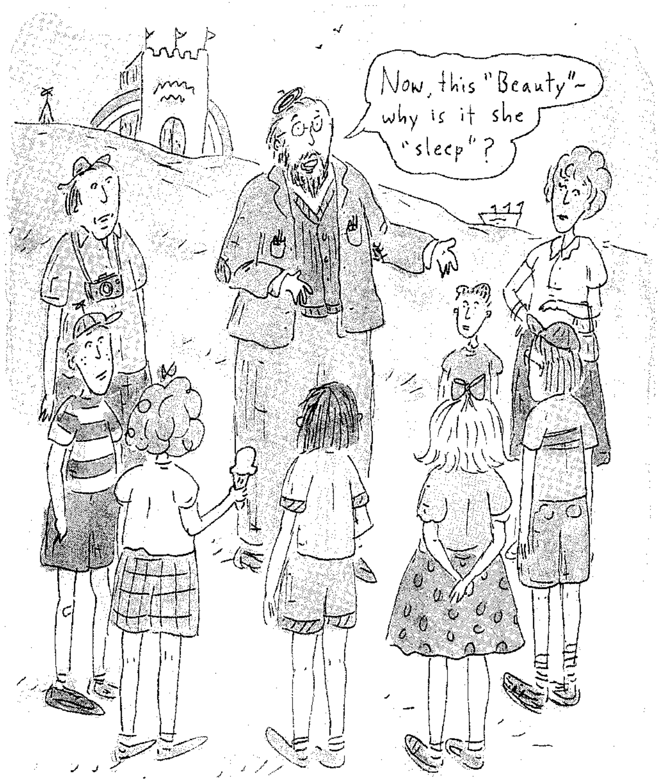
Tone Mickey down a little bit. There's no reason he has to be so cheerful all the time. It's *annoying*.

Life is complex, n'est-ce pas?



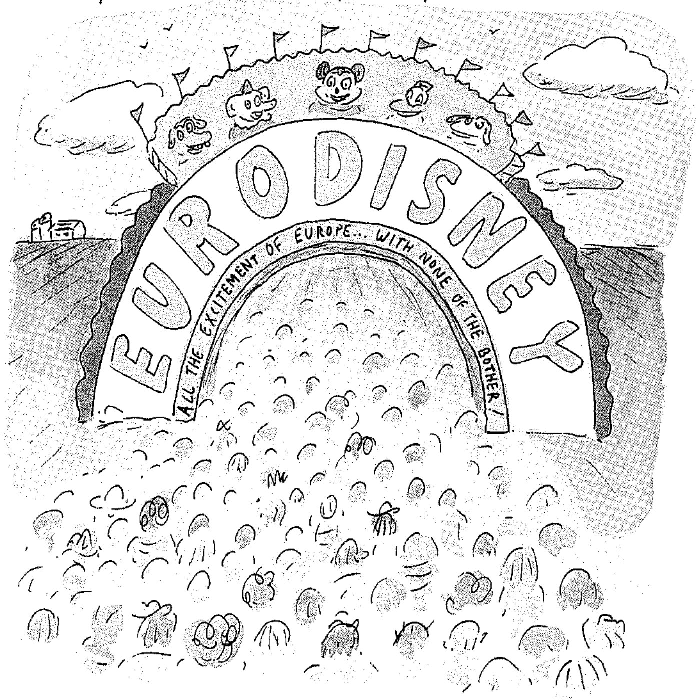
Build a few rides based specifically on great French poems, novels, etc.

A SEASON IN HELL
WHIRLING MADELEINES
AAAAAGH!!!
THE Madame Bovary



Dress tour guides like college professors and encourage them to deconstruct everything.

Now, this "Beauty"— why is it she "sleep"?



Ship it here and reopen it in Nebraska.

EURODISNEY
ALL THE EXCITEMENT OF EUROPE... WITH NONE OF THE BOTHER!

R. Chast

began to hope that they would be included in the annual amnesty, marking the anniversary of the Dergue. "That was the worst time," Princess Rebecca said. "You pinned all your hopes on that particular day, and there was no way to know. The releases were totally arbitrary—there was no logic to what they did." The years went by, and the princesses' names were never on the list.

Finally, in 1979, four years after arriving at Akaki, Princess Yashasha Worq became the first member of the Emperor's family to be released. At first, she refused to go; it somehow seemed a betrayal for her to leave the others behind. But they persuaded her, and—still wearing her jewelry—she marched out through the prison gate.

Then, in 1983, Princess Rebecca and her sister Mimi were released. Rebecca still doesn't know why. "The anniversary had passed," she said. "And I had made up my mind that we would never be released as long as Mengistu was still alive. I was always the strongest of our group, but that Sunday I fell apart. I couldn't stop crying. I knew I would *rot* in prison. Nine years is a hell of a long time. I was ill, and was in the clinic in my pajamas, as a matter of fact, and I went to my mother to say good night before they locked us up. I heard commotion. Everyone was shouting—the murderers, the thieves, the guards. 'You've got your papers, Rebecca! You can go home!' "

LADY YESHIMMABET GUMA is an elegant woman with almond skin and spirited dark eyes. Her gray hair is cut short, framing her face; despite her years, she still moves with grace. In 1934, the writer Byron Khun De Prorok visited her native province of Wollega, where both her grandfather and her first husband were powerful Oromo tribal chiefs, and later described her, in "Dead Men Do Tell Tales," as "one of the most beautiful women I had ever seen. Her beauty was matched only by the beauty of her emerald ring."

Now she wore no jewelry except two simple wedding bands—hers and Ras Mesfin's—and a gold cross, and she always dressed in black.

She greeted me warmly when I arrived at her daughter Tiruayer's home, a modest stone and clapboard bungalow. It was the only house the family had been given when the Dergue confiscated Ras Mesfin's twenty or so homes and estates, even though, technically, each family member was permitted to retain one house. But now Lady Yeshimmabet and all her children who had returned from exile for the royal funeral were staying with Tiruayer—they had nowhere else to go. A slightly faded photograph of Ras Mesfin and Lady Yeshimmabet, in formal attire, hung on a wall of the drawing room; it had been taken on the eve of Haile Selassie's twenty-fifth coronation ball. A few other family photographs were placed on a mantel, but nearly everything else was gone. All the clothes, toys, pictures, school prizes, and mementos of Lady Yeshimmabet's thirteen children had been taken away by the Dergue.

Visitors came to pay their respects as we talked, and Lady Yeshimmabet received them from an overstuffed armchair at the head of the room. Her

BROUGHT FROM BEYOND

The magpie and the bowerbird, its odd
predilection unheard of by Marco Polo
when he came upon, high in Badakhshan,
that blue stone's

embedded glint of pyrites, like the dance
of light on water, or of angels
(the surface tension of the Absolute)
on nothing,

turned, by processes already ancient,
into pigment: ultramarine, brought from
beyond the water it's the seeming
color of,

and of the berries, blooms, and pebbles
finickingly garnishing an avian
shrine or bower with the rarest hue
in nature,

whatever nature is: the magpie's eye for
glitter from the clenched fist of
the Mesozoic folding: the creek sands,
the mine shaft,

the siftings and burnishings, the ingot,
the pagan artifact: to propagate
the faith, to find the metal, unearth it,
hoard it up,

to, by the gilding of basilicas,
transmute it: O magpie, O bowerbird,
O Marco Polo and Coronado, where do
these things, these

fabrications come from—the holy places,
ark and altarpiece, the aureoles,
the seraphim—and underneath it all
the howling?

—AMY CLAMPITT

"Would you mind a visitor? That frown intrigues me."

• •

face, unlined and youthful, belied her seventy-six years, and she seemed unaccountably serene. A small electric heater glowed at her feet.

"The first time I was imprisoned, in July of 1975, I was held at the Third Police Station with other ministers' wives," Lady Yeshimmabet said. "It was an absolutely ghastly place. There were eight people—myself, the wife of the chief of police, and six thieves—in a room that measured perhaps two metres by two. It had corrugated-metal walls and a mud floor. You cannot imagine the masses of worms that were crawling over that floor. It was the rainy season, and there were holes in the walls. The rain came in, carrying an acrid urine smell—the toilet, which was our only convenience, was just outside our cell. There were no bathing facilities. I didn't bathe for nearly a month. The odor. The flies. The bugs. The worms. That was the day I hated I was born. My faith helped me. I've always been very religious, and I said to God, 'You've shown me the best. Now you are clearly showing me the worst.' "

"Were you ever told why you were arrested?" I asked.

"A young major called me in one morning. I felt rather saddened for him, he was so young, and he told me that I had been arrested because the next day they were going to confiscate my house, and they thought I would commit suicide. At first, I thought he was joking, and I smiled. Then I shouted at him—something that is very out of character for me. 'You killed my husband! You imprisoned my daughters! You've sent assassination squads after my sons! And you think I would kill myself because you took a house!' Then I calmed down, and told him that my house had been nationalized a year before, when my husband was killed. They took everything—the houses, the estates, the farms. We had no income, nothing at all.

"Then I was silent. So was the major. He wrote down my answer and said nothing more. He told me at the end that he had been ordered to torture me, and had refused. For the next twenty days, they never asked me anything else."

I asked Lady Yeshimmabet about the three and a half years she had spent in Akaki Prison, surrounded by criminals.

"I was never overwhelmed by being an aristocrat," she replied. "I was like a tourist, passing through life. I knew there would be change, and I was prepared. But I never thought they would be as cruel as that. Quite honestly, I didn't even know where I was being taken until we got to Akaki's gate, and the driver opened his window and shouted out 'I have prisoners for you!' It was the first moment I knew I was under arrest. At least, this time I was with three of my daughters. The first time, I was alone in this horrible little cell, but there I learned the rules. Manicure scissors were most definitely not permitted in prison, so the first thing I did before they confiscated my scissors was cut my nails."

Rahel, Tiruayer, and I left their mother and went into the kitchen, where Ras Mesfin's gold ceremonial crown, which he had received from Haile Selassie during his investiture as a duke, and his many medals were arranged on a black velvet drape. They had been retrieved from various hiding places, and had just been polished for the royal funeral. He had been the most highly decorated man in the country, receiving the Empire's top civilian and military awards. Now his achievements were in his daughter's kitchen, sparkling reminders laid out on a Formica tabletop.

The conversation turned to the past, and I asked Rahel and Tiruayer about their imprisonment.

Rahel had been thirty-two and Tiruayer twenty-six when the soldiers came and arrested them, along with a third sister and Lady Yeshimmabet, in February of 1976. They and the other women of Haile Selassie's court were taken to the same squat barracks where the princesses were held, but they were herded into the room on the other side of the wall. What they were about to encounter was even more squalid than the princesses' world.

"I will never forget the first time we walked through that door," Tiruayer said. "All I could think of was a story from my childhood, 'The Devil's Dome.' The room was filled with criminals—

The Old Neighborhood

• •

thieves, murderers, the insane—and filth was everywhere. There were flies, fleas, rats, and bugs crawling across the floor, then up and down the walls. But the prisoners—they hadn't bathed in years—were the filthiest of all. Some of them were screaming—they were ready to fight at any time. Others were singing their sadness away. When they looked at us, it was with dead, hollow eyes. There were two barrels for water—one for drinking and one for washing—and one of the prisoners made herself responsible for doling the water out. She was a murderess, sentenced to twenty years. There's a certain hierarchy in prison, and the murderers are at the top of the pyramid."

Tiruayer rolled her eyes and shook her head. "You can't imagine how deplorable hygiene was," she went on. "I remember one day the room had a three-foot pile of fruit peels on the floor. One of the thieves was on garbage detail, and she didn't move. I said to myself, 'I have two arms and two legs, and I cannot see myself rotting—rotting like a pile of fruit.' So I rolled up my jeans. Everyone was watching. I did it slowly, testing myself as well. They continued watching; nobody moved. A few days later, the head murderess announced, 'We have decided to appoint Tiruayer the sanitation officer of the room.' "

The hundred or so noblewomen who shared the cell had arrived at the crumbling prison barracks dressed in mourning black; nearly all their husbands or fathers had been executed or imprisoned or would later disappear. The women's only possessions were their mattresses, which were brought from home, and shopping bags in which they stored their world—clothes, food, face creams, plates. Over the years, more and more bags, from Harrods and Selfridges, hung from nails on the barracks walls.

Like the princesses on the other side of the wall, the women of Haile Selassie's court were charged with no crime and were offered no promise of release. Some of them thought each night that they'd be released the following day; others were convinced that they'd been brought to Akaki to be killed.

And then there were the other prisoners. Mebrat, usually a gentle Eritrean woman, who had been accused of being a secessionist and was beaten into madness by the Dergue, would suddenly attack the noblewomen, and they would have to scream for their guards. Zerge would regale them with perfectly logical reasons for refusing to wash, then appall them with stories of how she had used rat poison to murder her stepson. A woman named Bogeye would spend hours cutting black thread out of her clothes—and out of anyone else's she could find. No one discovered why.

And there was Sallameh. At the mention of his name, Rahel and Tiruayer began to laugh. Sallameh was the prison censor. "He was really an odd little man, and he bore an uncanny resemblance to the Emperor," Rahel said. "He was actually quite self-conscious about it, and from time to time he would line us up and announce, 'Although many people think I look like Haile Selassie, I want to assure you there is no relationship.' We'd look at him, totally bewildered, and then he would raise a clenched fist."

Slowly, imperceptibly—no one was certain how or when it began—the women of Haile Selassie's court began running the prison themselves. They set up committees to take charge of health, sanitation, education, and sports, and, with their own funds, they built toilets and showers, and had their barracks connected to the municipal water line. They demanded to have their own stoves, and relatives brought them food. Their life came to resemble that in a big, brawling, dirty boarding school.

During the day, Lady Yeshimmabet instructed the thieves and murderers on how to bathe—with mixed results—and Rahel and Tiruayer taught in the prison school, which the women of the court had built. Each year, officials from the Ministry of Education came to administer exams. The highest marks in the nation were scored by the prisoners. They came from all provinces and from all tribes. Some were the children of nobles, others were from excruciatingly poor hamlets in the countryside. Some were members of the proliferating liberation fronts; others belonged to political parties, which the Dergue had banned. Many were apolitical—some as young as ten. You didn't have to join a political movement to be imprisoned under Mengistu. To be young was a crime.

During the evenings, the women of Haile Selassie's court would sing or dance, or they would draw up elaborate charts: How much water did they need to wash their hands? To drink? Where could they walk without seeing a guard? What did they need? Afterward, they would make coffee, and sit with the murderers and thieves.

"Then," Tiruayer said, "the *other* students arrived, and our calm little world was turned into a battleground overnight." The students were Marxists, primarily from two groups: one had opposed Mengistu since the takeover by the Dergue; the other had served him during the Red Terror campaign but then had fallen out. When the students were not quarrelling with the noblewomen, they were quarrelling among themselves. Class warfare became a fact of prison life.

"The antipathy between us was total," Tiruayer went on. "They were Marxists. We were feudals." The students settled in on the left side of the room, with their knapsacks and sleeping bags. On the wall they hung their revolutionary flags. The noblewomen held their ground on the other side of the room, their shopping bags from Harrods hanging in stark defiance on the wall.

The verbal battles were constant. The thieves and the murderers looked on in bafflement. Then, without announcement, they pulled their mattresses and their knots of dirty clothes across the barracks floor, to the right side of the room. The women of the court were back in power once more.

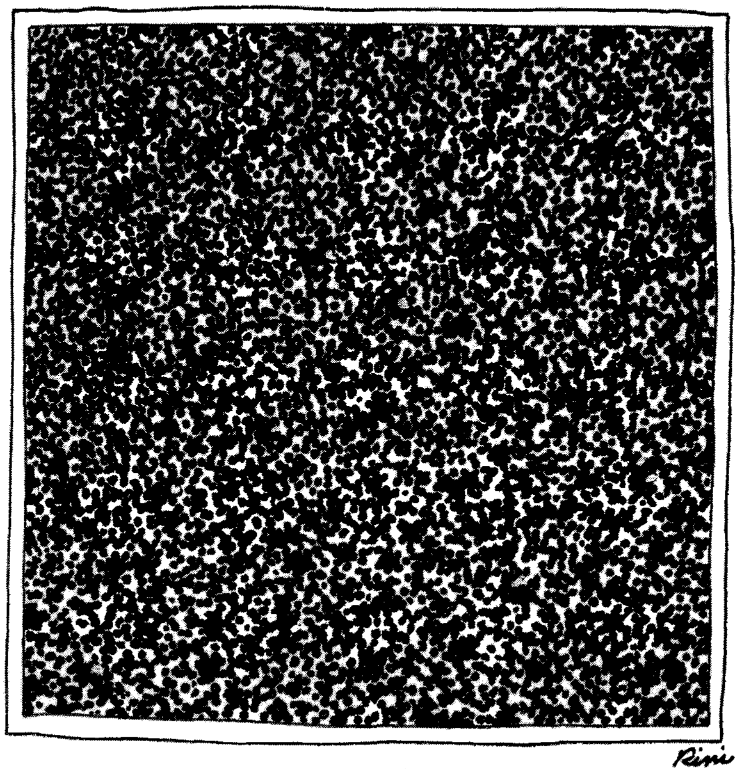
Rahel, when I pressed her, told me that her worst moment had come in the middle of one night. "I'll never forget it," she said. "We were about two hundred that night, and I got up to use the toilet. Everyone was asleep on the floor, and I had to tiptoe around them. Mebrat, the Eritrean, was by then chained to the wall, and was chanting to herself. Another madwoman was rocking back and forth. I looked around and thought, Are we *really* living like this? For three seconds, I lost my mind. It was the thought—the thought of staying there forever."

After seven years and seven months, Rahel and Tiruayer were released. Like Princess Rebecca, they don't know why.

NEARLY every province revolted during Mengistu's rule. There were major military operations in Eritrea—the strategic northern province at the gateway to the Red Sea—and in Ogaden, in the southeast; a war with neighboring Somalia; and a proliferation of liberation fronts. The Eritreans, the Tigreans, the Oromos, the Afars—they all wanted out. In 1977, the Soviets arrived, to prop up Mengistu; they were followed quickly by fifteen thousand Cuban troops, and then by the Israelis, who supplied Mengistu with cluster bombs. Other powers, great and small—the Americans, the Saudis, and the Egyptians, to name a few—rushed to the scene, in support of various guerrilla groups. What had begun as a genuine social revolution, by an idealistic junior officer corps, had gone badly awry. Ethiopia had become a pivotal battleground of the Cold War, and Mengistu had destroyed one of the most promising countries on the African continent.

Then, in the fall of 1989, the Tigre People's Liberation Front (T.P.L.F.)—a previously little-known Marxist group that had been fighting first from the university against the government of Haile Selassie and then from the Tigrean highlands against the Dergue—launched a devastating new offensive in the north. The following year, when it suddenly seemed plausible that the T.P.L.F., in alliance with Eritrean guerrillas, could topple the Mengistu regime, two T.P.L.F. founders, Meles Zenawi and Seyoum Mesfin, visited Washington. The United States had been Ethiopia's major arms supplier when Haile Selassie reigned but had adopted an exceedingly low profile during the time of the Dergue. Meles and Seyoum came to assure the Bush Administration that they were no longer hard-line followers of Marx. (One Administration official was so relieved that after the two leaders returned to the Tigrean hills he sent them boxes of books by writers ranging from Tocqueville to Gorbachev, presumably in an attempt to insure that they remained on the right path.)

In early 1991, when the Administration approached Mengistu in an attempt to negotiate freedom for Ethiopian Jews, it found itself embroiled in Mengistu's collapse, and in peace talks with a group of rebels whom it once

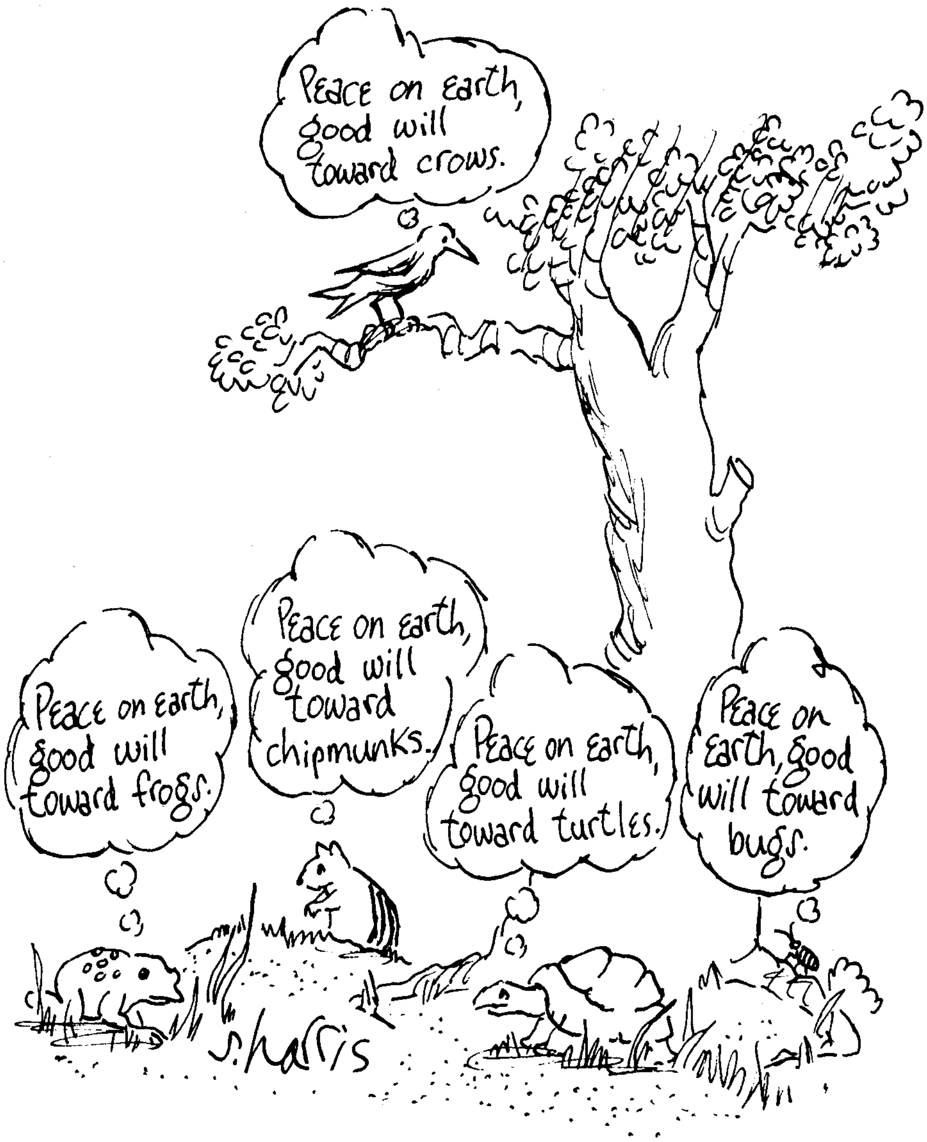


DISCONNECT THE DOTS

distrusted (and now admits it doesn't know very well). Nevertheless, that May, for the first time anyone could recall, an American Administration paved the way for a Marxist guerrilla group to assume power; it was also the first time that an armed liberation movement, having won, decided to share power in a transitional government with other political and guerrilla groups—there were thirty in all.

As the Tigrean forces waited on the outskirts of Addis and their leaders negotiated the power-sharing arrangement in talks brokered by the United States, Mengistu boarded a plane and went into exile in Zimbabwe, where he remains.

He left behind a divided and shattered country: the uneasy alliance that had been cobbled together only in the last century, with the establishment of the modern Ethiopian state, was badly frayed. Today, there is growing concern that, like the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia—and neighboring Somalia—Haile Selassie's old kingdom could simply fall apart. The dynamics of history and geography, prejudice and fear have coalesced dangerously around religion, language, and race. The guerrilla army that overthrew Mengistu and now rules as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, with Meles Zenawi as President, is still holding the old empire together—but only just. The most highly charged issue in Ethiopia is ethnic politics. In a sense, everything else springs from it: the inability of the new Tigrean government to find acceptance among the old Amhara élite; its inability to establish control over much of the countryside; its hesitation, and seeming ambivalence, in dealing with some of the more explosive aspects of Mengistu's legacy, including the contentious issues of returning nationalized land and of trying members of the Dergue, who terrorized the old empire for nearly two decades.


Peace on earth, good will toward crows.
Peace on earth, good will toward frogs.
Peace on earth, good will toward chipmunks.
Peace on earth, good will toward turtles.
Peace on earth, good will toward bugs.
S. Harris

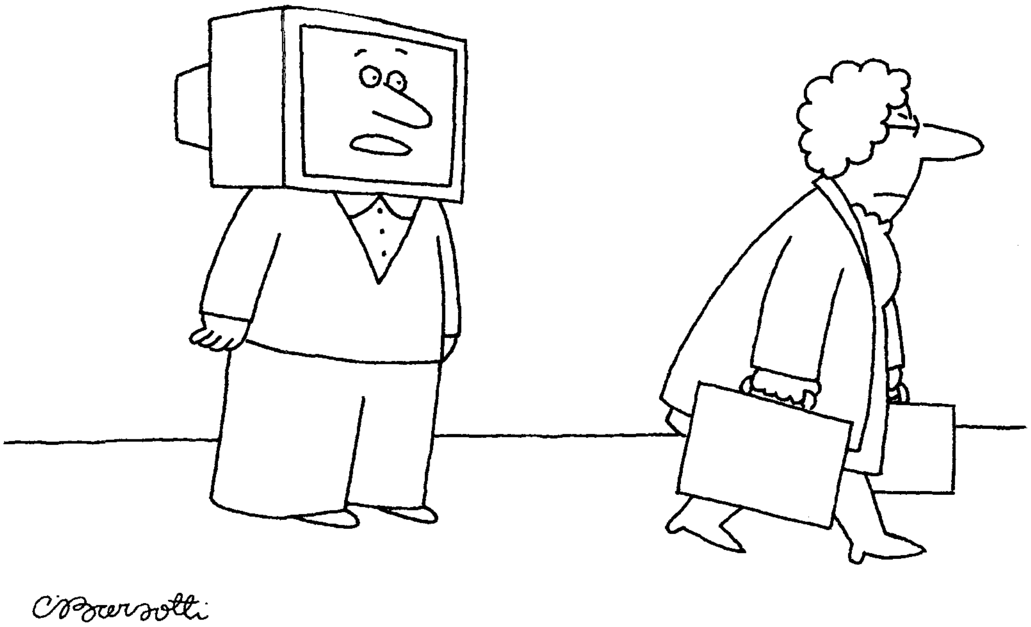
There have been continual rumors, born of the general uncertainty: rumors that the Oromo Liberation Front (O.L.F.), which claims to represent Ethiopia's largest tribe, and had been the junior partner in the coalition government until it withdrew, in June, had taken control of a number of southern towns; rumors that the Tigrean guerrillas had driven the Oromos out; rumors that the Afar Liberation Front was receiving a rather substantial amount of money and weapons from the Arab states; rumors of total confusion in the eastern province of Hararge. A Western ambassador who visited the area last summer told me that eight armed groups claim the region as their own. Each has it own colors, revolutionary banners, and flags. Dire Dawa, the province's largest city, has become a flagmakers' paradise.

In a suburb of Addis, I visited a tent city of Amhara refugees. They said that they had been evicted from Eritrea, on the Red Sea. In May of 1991, after a thirty-year independence war—waged first against Haile Selassie and then against the Dergue—the hundred thousand fighters of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front had taken control of the province. They are now confident of full independence when a formal referendum is held in April of next year. To all intents and purposes, Eritrea had achieved de-facto independence when the Dergue collapsed. Many Ethiopians were already asking if the departure of their most geopolitically important slice of land would be a precedent for national disintegration or a warning against it.

ADDIS KATAMA, in the suburbs of Addis, is a sprawling, lower-class neighborhood of some hundred thousand people, where simple houses, built of boards and chaff, line a labyrinth of open sewers and muddy lanes. Its residents, mostly laborers and shopkeepers, once found solace in their anonymity. Then the Katama (or "town"), as it is usually called, became one of Mengistu's most vicious battlegrounds.

I found scars of his Red Terror campaign everywhere I went: on stucco walls and metal sheeting pockmarked with bullet holes; in young men who had been tortured into madness; in old women who had been raped.

From the moment you arrive in the Katama, the problems facing Ethiopia overwhelm you: the shattered economy; the empty treasury; the impoverishment. Famine still threatens some areas, and much of the old kingdom's infrastructure has collapsed or been taken apart. There is no army, navy, air force, or police. Half the factories are closed. Much of the farmland has eroded.



"But, Marge, five hundred channels. Won't that make a difference?"

And there are thousands and thousands of missing—Ethiopia's "disappeared ones." Nearly everyone I met offered a tragic story or issued an appeal: Find my son. Find my father. Give me back my land. Why isn't the United States helping us? They ask this question over and over again.

I had come to the Katama with four members of a citizens' group that was attempting to find the bodies of the thousands who had disappeared during the Red Terror campaign, and bring those responsible for the atrocities to trial. Hiruy Negatu, the secretary of the group, was still searching for a brother, and Kidane Mariam, a board member, for a son. They told me that during the Red Terror's most savage moments at least fifty-four thousand people had been killed in Addis Ababa alone. I had asked them to bring me to the Katama because I hoped to get a sense there of what it had been like to live under Mengistu on the outside. Nearly everyone I had met thus far either had been a guerrilla, fighting in the hills in Eritrea or Tigre, or had been imprisoned during Mengistu's regime; and I had been told that in many respects the safest place to be was in prison. I was also curious about what people were thinking now, since the Katama was one of scores of such urban neighborhoods where the revolution against Haile Selassie began to take shape, spearheaded by a group of Marxist intellectuals under the banner of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (E.P.R.P.). When the Emperor was overthrown, the Party launched a violent campaign—known as the White Terror—against the Mengistu regime, believing that a true revolution could not be led by a military junta of enlisted men.

The E.P.R.P. set up underground cells throughout Addis—a number of them in the Katama—and also in the countryside. Daily executions followed. Mengistu responded with his Red Terror campaign. His primary instrument was the Kebele—a local revolutionary unit, whose members were heavily armed. They were recruited from their own neighborhoods, and they set up their own jails, where prisoners spent their time playing cards and waiting for death.

Some three thousand authorized killers roamed the Katama, and bodies began littering the narrow lanes. Hundreds of teen-agers—and children as young as six—disappeared overnight. In one tiny alley, I learned about a boy named Wube. I hadn't gone in search of him; I had simply stumbled onto what was remembered of his life.

Wube's home was barely distinguishable from the other pastel-colored houses of stucco or mud that lined the alleyway. Here and there, the houses were interrupted by grocery stores, fruit stalls, or music shops. The neighborhood was part of Kebele No. 21. We entered the house through a narrow door and found Wube's parents, Mihrete and Elfinesh, and his three sisters sitting in the living room.

Elfinesh spoke no English, and while her husband welcomed us she went to a small mantel, above a charcoal stove, and retrieved two photographs. Incense burned on the mantel, and an icon of Christ hung above it on the wall. She came to me and, without uttering a word, handed me the picture frames. Schoolboys in starched white shirts stared earnestly from the photographs.

Wube had been in the eighth grade, and his brother Bekele in the eleventh, when the Kebele vigilantes came, in 1977, and took the boys away.

"They were collecting all the young people in the village," Mihrete, a sixty-year-old merchant, said. "My sons tried to hide, but it was impossible. The revolutionary squads were from the neighborhood—one member lives just next door. They came, as they always did, in the evening, just after dark. They took the little one to the Kebele, and they tortured him in every possible way. Then they killed him and dumped his body on the side of the road, so that we could see him—so that the rest of the neighborhood could see him, too. He was meant to be an example to all of us."

Elfinesh, interrupting her husband, spoke to me, through an interpreter. Sitting wrapped in a blanket on a bed in the living room, her head covered with a scarf, she held Wube's picture and cried softly, rocking back and forth. "We're not certain," she said. "We *think* it was Wube's body. We knew from a neighbor that he had been tortured the night before, so the following morning, when we heard that there were bodies along the road, we went to look for him. There were about twenty bodies, piled in a stack, outside the Kebele office, but we were not permitted to approach them. We could only see them from across the road, and their faces had been covered with bags. I tried, I tried so hard, to identify my sons by their clothes—maybe a shirt, maybe a shoe."

She paused for a moment, and then went on, "As we were standing there, someone came out of the Kebele office, carrying signs that read 'Let Red Terror Be Promoted.' Then he nailed them into the backs of our boys.

"I stood for twenty-four hours with the other mothers. Then, in the morning, a garbage truck arrived, and the driver scooped up the bodies with a shovel and loaded them into the back of his truck. We followed him, running and screaming. Someone from the Kebele fired shots over our heads. He ordered us not to cry and not to mourn. It was anti-revolutionary to cry, he said."

Each time the discovery of a new mass grave is announced on Ethiopia Radio, or tacked to the door of one of the neighborhood shops, Elfinesh begins roaming Addis's streets, going to various sites to check the bodies. She remembers exactly what Wube and Bekele were wearing that night.

"We tried to buy our boys' bodies back from the Kebele," Wube's father said. "For a year or so, they were selling the bodies to the families for two hundred or three hundred birr"—a hundred or a hundred and fifty dollars. "We didn't have much money, but everyone chipped in. When we went to the Kebele, however, they told us that Wube and Bekele were no longer there. Then they ordered me to pay twenty-five birr, for the bullets they used to kill my sons."

After a few minutes, Mihrete said, "We still know very little about my older son. We only heard that he was imprisoned by the Army, and then his mother finally found him in an Army engineering camp. She took food to him daily, and then, one day, they told her not to bring food anymore."

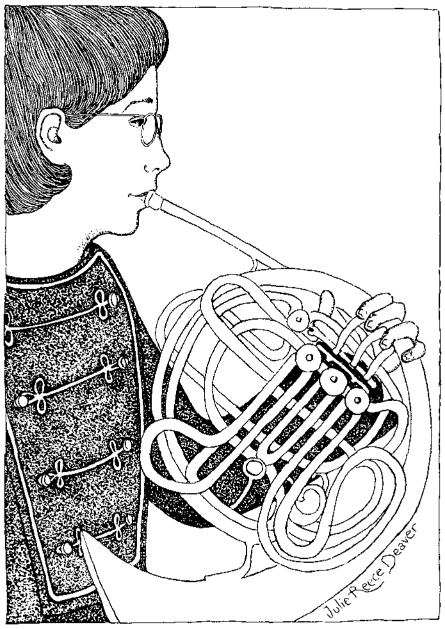
I asked Wube's father if he knew where his son's torturers were now.

"One lives next door," he answered. "Another is just down the road. I see them every day. Every day, I see the men who killed my boys. We have been silent for fourteen years. Then this new government came. They told us that there would be trials, that we could confront the torturers of our children, as accusers, face to face. We have identified ten torturers from this block alone. But a year has passed, and nothing has happened. And if they are not tried, if they are not punished, it can all happen again."

Did he believe that the trials would take place?

"They had better," he replied. "We want justice, not revenge, but if there are no trials there will be families avenging their dead—and then there could be a national bloodbath."

As we said our goodbyes, Wube's mother came to me, still holding his photograph. "He was only in the eighth grade," she said.



WHEN we left Wube's home, we traced his path to the Kebele office where he'd been held, and met Teklu Gizau, a thirty-seven-year-old engineer, who had been appointed the new chairman of the district by the transitional government. He himself had been tortured here, with seven neighbors and friends, including Wube, in 1977. Then they had all been taken to the courtyard to be shot. Teklu had escaped, but Wube had been too little to run.

There had been such prisons in every village, in every district, in every Kebele, and many of the men and the women who had killed in Mengistu's name still lived in their old neighborhoods; others were at large. I was incredulous when I was told that most of them are still heavily armed.

We left the Katama and drove to Yeke, a prosperous middle-class neighborhood, where some of the bodies—after they were taken away from the Katama, and many other such neighborhoods, by municipal garbage collectors—had been buried in mass graves.

"We haven't finished digging yet," Teklu Debebe, who was the president of the citizens' committee, told me when we reached the crest of a hill. Mounds of red earth, perhaps twenty feet high, dotted the hills and a nearby field. Bulldozers sat idle as their operators waited for the rainy season to end. "This used to be an Army firing range," Teklu said. "People from the area told us that many of the prisoners were lined up against those trees and used for firing practice. Then they were thrown into mass graves. We've exhumed about twelve hundred bodies thus far. One family found both their father and their brother here—they identified their father by the gold fillings in his teeth and their brother by his clothes. But there have been very, very few identifications. Most of the remains are of persons unknown."

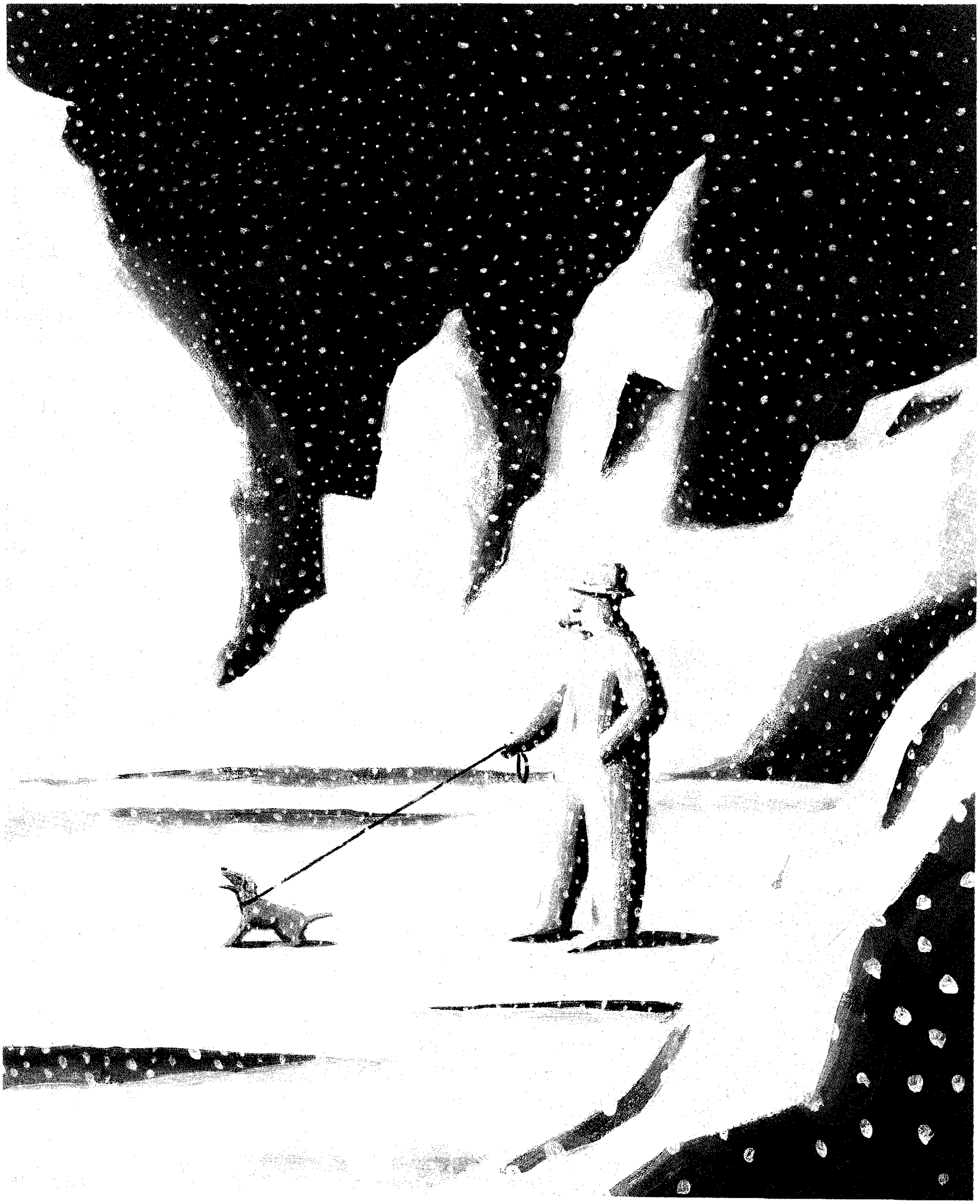
Some three thousand bodies are believed to be buried in Yeke's hills, and there are thousands of other such places all over Ethiopia.

I asked Teklu where the remains were now, and he said that they were being held in a number of places, waiting for the government to provide land

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK

WINTER WONDERLAND

by Benoît van Innis



for a burial site. The families had requested that all be buried together, as they had died.

Teklu drove me to a weather-beaten building that had once been a garage. Inside were twenty-five large wooden coffins. They contained the skeletons of approximately twenty-five hundred women and men. Teklu opened one of the coffins, and I saw shoes, skulls, bones. There was a piece of red-and-yellow homespun cloth that must have been part of a blouse. Lying next to it were the remains of a hand. Caked with dirt but still visible on one of the fingers was a gold wedding band.

THE Ethiopian Orthodox Church was the main bulwark of the imperial Crown; for centuries, this mountain kingdom was an island of Christianity in the midst of Islam. (By the eighteenth century, the Church owned a third of all the property in the empire.) But when Haile Selassie's last Patriarch, Abuna Tewoflos, was executed by Mengistu, and the Emperor himself dethroned, the Church stepped quickly into line behind the Dergue. After Mengistu was overthrown, many in the Church believed that a new Patriarch should be selected, to replace Mengistu's hand-picked choice.

In July of 1992, Abuna Paulos, a stocky black-bearded man of fifty-six, who has a doctorate in theology from Princeton University and a master's degree from Yale, returned to Addis on vacation from Manhattan's Upper West Side, where he headed an Ethiopian Orthodox church. Much to his surprise, he was elected Patriarch. He at once became one of the most powerful men in Ethiopia.

His credentials were considered impeccable by foreign diplomats, but he became ensnarled in controversy with some of his own countrymen. They alleged that his election, by a synod of bishops, was illegal, because Mengistu's last Patriarch—who had judiciously stepped down, for "health reasons"—was still alive. It was widely suspected that the more likely explanation for their displeasure was that Abuna Paulos, like the country's new rulers, was a Tigrean, from the north; he was thus the first non-Amhara to head the Orthodox Church since it severed its ties with the Patriarchate of Alexandria, in 1959. (Until that time, the Ethiopian Patriarch had always been an Egyptian Copt.)

Abuna Paulos greeted me warmly when I called on him one afternoon at the Patriarchate, a rather unprepossessing building next to St. Mary's Church. The complex belied the enormous influence and power that the Church had wielded for sixteen centuries. It had been *the* constant in Ethiopian life, and, until Haile Selassie was dethroned, it had been the official state church. Now, however, it was facing a particularly testing time. The Dergue had nationalized the Church's vast land holdings and sown discord among its priests. It was being challenged by a resurgence of Islam, both from within Ethiopia and from neighboring Sudan, where a fundamentalist regime not unlike that of the Iranian ayatollahs, with which it was closely aligned, was attempting to export its own brand of Islamic militancy.

Dressed in a purple silk robe topped with a black blanket, and wearing a black ecclesiastical cap, the Patriarch received me in his office. He held a gold cross as we talked.

I began our conversation by asking him if there would be Church reform—a growing number of Ethiopians had begun criticizing the Church as archaic and pre-Renaissance.

"There has to be reform if the Church is to survive," he said. "We've got to go beyond preaching on Sunday, and get the Church involved. Over the last seventeen years, every Ethiopian has been damaged or hurt. Look around you—there is nothing but squalor and disease. We've got to set up health centers, orphanages—do social work. There are many young priests at the village level who are extremely eager for reform."

"Worker priests?" I asked him.

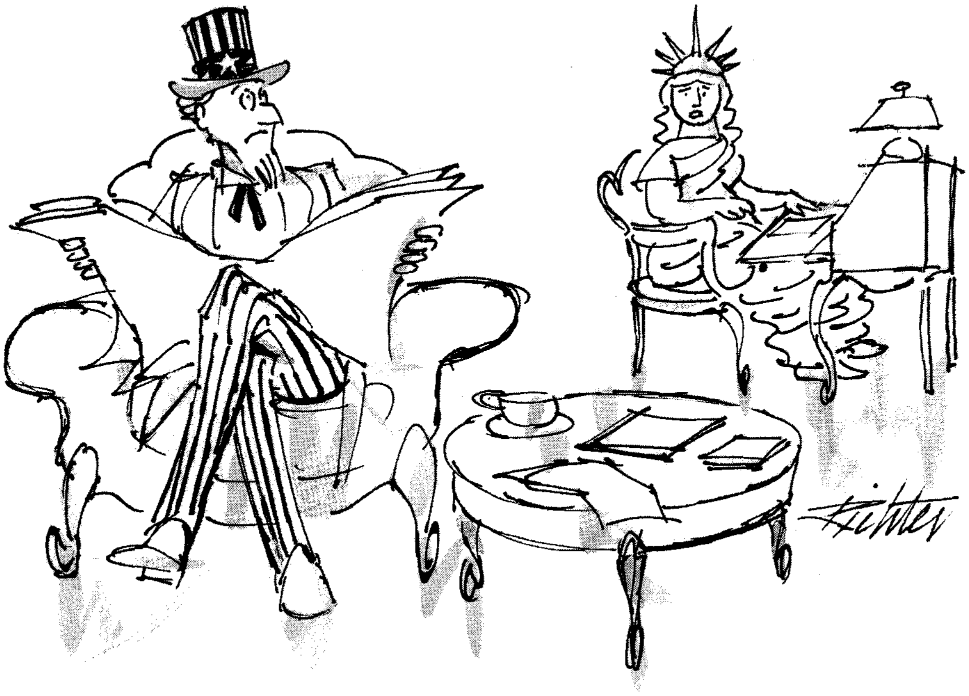
"Precisely," he said.

Did changing not only the image but the priorities of the Church mean that it would cease to be the major source of support for the monarchy, if the monarchy should ever be reinstated?

"Don't embarrass me by asking political questions," the Patriarch said.

It was already clear to many Ethiopians that Abuna Paulos was an exceedingly political man. He reminded me a bit of the late President Archbishop Makarios, of Cyprus: he possessed the same charisma and political agility.

Had the Church not failed the people by its acquiescence to the Mengistu regime?



"Who's our representative?"

McCALLISTER

"It was not the Church," he answered, seeming slightly ill at ease. Then he added, "It was individual priests."

I asked the Patriarch what, in his opinion, were the most serious things that the Dergue had done to undermine the Church.

"They arrested or shot bishops, and forced others to retire," he replied. "They confiscated all Church property. Holy Trinity Theological College was closed. They shelled and bombed churches all over the north. They arrested the Holy Father, Patriarch Tewoflos, for absolutely no reason—no reason at all." He hesitated for a moment, as though deciding whether to go on. Then he continued, "They beat him, stripped him naked, and dragged him across the ground, like an animal, like a *dog*. Then they strangled him to death. This was the *Holy Father*." His voice rose. "What more humiliation could this godless government inflict on the Church?"

In the nineteen-seventies, as the Bishop of Ecumenical and Social Affairs, Abuna Paulos had been one of Patriarch Tewoflos's key aides, and had been imprisoned himself from 1976 to 1982. So I asked if any international organizations or any governments had done anything to try to halt the atrocities of the Dergue.

It was clear that he was angry and bitter even before he spoke. "Not one," he replied. "The Red Cross helped the victims, and Amnesty International wrote emotional articles, which made you cry, but, after that, did those who read the articles do anything? When we were in prison, did our own *Church* do anything to help? Why didn't the Church stand up and defend us? Why didn't it say, 'This is persecution'?"

He looked away, and then turned back toward me. "Do you *really* understand the enormity of what happened here?" he asked. "We have millions of martyrs. Martyrs are not just those who have been shot with a bullet but those who have been crippled through beatings, those who have lost their memories through electroshock, those who were the victims of bombs. How many bombs—thousands and thousands—fell on villages in the north! Just because these people lived within these borders, they were bombed. Is it better to be shot and die or to lose your limbs and then survive? What about the hundreds of thousands who were put in mass graves? What had they done? The fact that ten or fifteen young people were standing together on a corner—did they have to be shot? What of the parents who saw their children shot in front of them and then were made to dance around the dead bodies? Or the parents who had to pay for the bullet that blew off their son's head? My God, where was the world? Why did no one *care*? And why is Mengistu free? Why has he not been judged? What kind of international morality is there? What kind of international law?"

I NEXT called on Seyoum Mesfin, the T.P.L.F. leader, who was now the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the transitional government. I spoke with him one morning shortly before he began critical talks with the World Bank, on a seven-hundred-and-seventy-million-dollar program to jump-start Ethiopia's economy. An articulate forty-three-year-old scientist, who favors three-piece suits, Seyoum is a sophisticated insider, equally at home with his guerrilla fighters and with chiefs of state abroad. Like Abuna Paulos and President Meles, he was born in Adowa, in the north of Tigre. For centuries, the Ruling Houses of Tigre and Shoa—the royal line to which Haile Selassie belonged—fought on and off, and were riven by power struggles. The most recent encounter was now being played out.

Although statistics in Ethiopia are often suspect, it is generally agreed that the Tigreans account for some twelve per cent of the population, the Amharas for twenty-five per cent, and the Oromos, the largest ethnic group in the country, for about forty per cent. Critics of the new government, including the respected Mesfin Wolde-Mariam, a professor of geography at Addis Ababa University, charge that the Tigrean leaders have been "ethnicizing" Ethiopian politics, by, for example, redrawing the country's regional boundaries along ethnic lines, and in doing so have been playing Russian roulette. In speaking with the professor earlier, I had asked whether it was probable that Eritrea would gain independence, and he had replied, "The question is not whether Eritrea will go but whether the rest of Ethiopia will remain."

So when I met the Foreign Minister, I asked him if, as the critics charged, his government, by fuelling ethnic politics, was presiding over the disintegration of Ethiopia.

"That's utter nonsense," Seyoum said. "And it avoids the key issue of constructing a multiparty, multinational state. It is not this government that created eighty different ethnic and linguistic groups. What we've done is to recognize ethnic diversity and to build on it. There is simply no alternative. All other options have been tried, including keeping this country together by military might. It did not work, and cannot work. Under previous governments, there was excessive centralization of power. We're ready to decentralize—to offer genuine autonomy to the regions. It is the only way to avoid fragmentation, Balkanization. You see what has been happening in the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. That is precisely what we are determined to avoid. You cannot force a people to remain united; you've got to accommodate their priorities."

"But you've told people they can secede from the country," I said. "Isn't that a rather daring multiparty experiment?"

" 'Unorthodox' is perhaps a better choice of words," Seyoum replied. "But, yes, we have made it very clear in the Charter"—a document, drawn up in July of 1991 by the coalition partners in the transitional government, that defines the government's mandate until it holds national elections, in 1994—"that if any nationalist or ethnic group wants to secede it can do so as long as it's done through a referendum or a plebiscite. There is no need for any group in this country to launch a civil war."

"But what about the Oromo Liberation Front?" I asked. The O.L.F. had been the second-largest party in the government until it withdrew in June, protesting the conduct of that month's regional elections, which it had boycotted, and which were indeed seriously flawed. Battles between the militias of the government and the O.L.F. ensued.

"I'm more optimistic now than I was two months ago," he said. "The security situation is far better. When the O.L.F. left the government, its fighters decamped, and there were serious problems in those areas where its military was on the move. It was a no-war, no-peace situation—mostly in the eastern part of the country, and also in some parts of the west. The O.L.F. troops were trying to demolish the infrastructure of the country—blowing up bridges, firing on trains en route to Djibouti, attacking civilian positions in a number of villages in the vicinity of major towns. But now the most troubled areas—in the central highlands, in the east around Harer, Wollega in the west, and in almost all parts of the south—are free of any organized guerrilla activity."

Then he added, with some emphasis, "I want to make it absolutely clear that it was the O.L.F.'s decision to launch attacks, and we were forced to counterattack. I wish the O.L.F. would understand that the chapter on civil war in this country is closed."

He pressed a buzzer, and a secretary came in carrying a silver tea service and plates of cakes. As we ate and drank, I asked the Foreign Minister, who is considered one of the government's key policymakers, why the elections were marred, according to international observers, by widespread government intimidation, mismanagement, and, in many areas, lack of any real choice, and why the O.L.F. had not been permitted to field its candidates fairly.

"The government is ready to take corrective measures wherever the elections were flawed," Seyoum replied. "Perhaps we had unduly high expectations of our ability to hold democratic elections when none of the institutions were in place. Perhaps we went into them too quickly. But people have got to understand that these elections were the first multiparty elections ever held in this country. The institutions of democracy had never existed here. What's im-

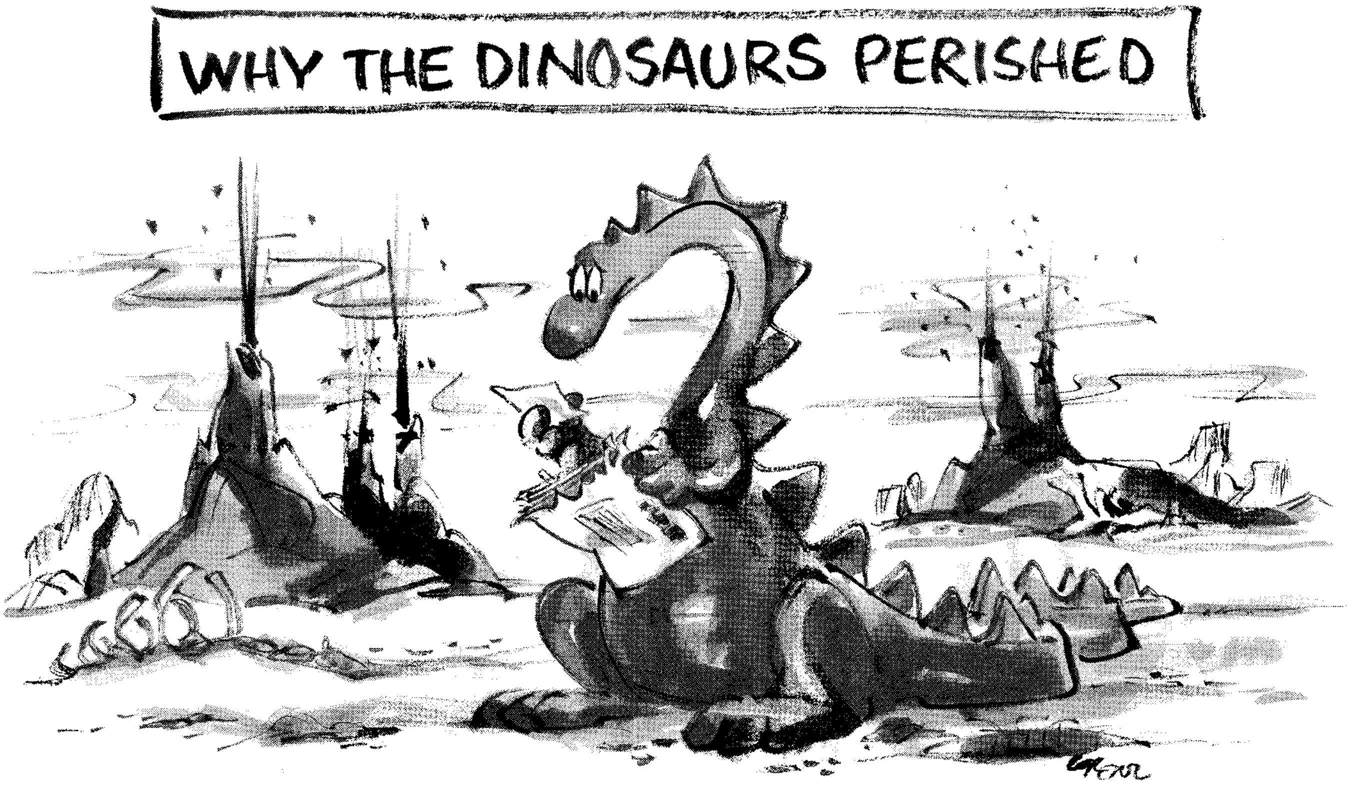
CELEBRATIONS

And for the holidays some old people always come
from far away—
strangers, distant relatives
of your wife or of people you know.
You usually see them
for the last time, and sometimes
for the first, almost like portraits
by Old Masters in a small
exhibition. They want to stay
sprightly and they smile
to you, to a few others,
as though they wished to fix
their photos in the air. Look,
the whites of their eyes jiggle.

Meanwhile the food is getting cold,
vodka in tumblers
is taking on the taste of glass, and they
talk on, pushing toward you the cake
they baked at home. The men
are drowsy, the children sleep.

But almost always
someone listens to the end—
a timid, well-bred
young man. Old enough
to drink vodka
with the grownups, he's still
a bit uneasy
with women, he's still single,
and now he nods politely to the words
of a charming old lady, whom he'll wind up
taking to the station
tomorrow
after breakfast.

—PIOTR SOMMER
(*Translated, from the Polish, by the author and M. Kasper.*)



"Thank you for letting us consider the enclosed manuscript. Although it has obvious merit, we are sorry to say that it does not suit our present needs."

* * *

portant is that the country is going forward. We are building these institutions from scratch. We are setting up an independent judiciary, establishing a police force, processing a draft constitution. We have a Council of Representatives, or Parliament. We invited two hundred and fifty international observers to monitor the elections. This shows our desire to learn. We accept criticism if it's constructive. We cannot achieve everything overnight."

"Would the elections be reheld if the O.L.F. made this a condition for laying down its arms and rejoining the political process?" I asked.

The Minister responded in the affirmative.

IN October, the government and the O.L.F. began secret talks, negotiated by the ambassadors of five Western nations, including the United States, in an attempt to bring the O.L.F. back into the government. In many respects, this amorphous, largely Muslim Oromo group held the key to Ethiopia's political stability.

I met the O.L.F.'s deputy leader, Lencho Lata, in Washington shortly before the talks began, and asked him what his conditions were for returning to the government. "A real power-sharing arrangement, and not a dictatorship of Tigreans," he said. "We want new elections and the creation of a multi-ethnic, national Army, as opposed to the T.P.L.F.'s Army, which is policing the country now—and we want that Army withdrawn from the Oromo lands."

"And if the talks fail?"

"It means guerrilla warfare in the south," Lencho replied. "We'll do everything to make it impossible for this government to rule, to control the country, or to raise revenue. We are twenty million Oromos against six million Tigreans, who don't know the region and don't speak the language. The cost will be high—the cost to the economy, and the cost in lives. But we have no doubt that eventually we'll win. We're in no hurry. It may take us five to ten years."

"But what are the O.L.F.'s long-term objectives? What does it want—simply more power in this government? Greater autonomy? An independent Oromia?"

Lencho refused to answer the question directly, saying only—perhaps seriously, perhaps not—"I lead the largest group of people in this country. Would I throw that away to become the President of an independent Oromia when I could become the President of Ethiopia?"

IN my conversation with Foreign Minister Seyoum, I asked whether the O.L.F. posed a serious security threat.

"I'm convinced that they want to turn Ethiopia into a Bosnia," he said.

A number of Ethiopians had told me that their greatest fear was that the O.L.F. would recruit the remnants of Mengistu's Army—the largest in black Africa—which had been disbanded, en masse, by the transitional government when it came to power. I asked Seyoum where the former soldiers—some four hundred thousand of them—were now.

"They're all demobilized," he said. "We've integrated most of them into the villages, but some are creating real security problems—banditry, primarily—in the central areas, the south, and some parts of the east. It's a problem. But now it's at an acceptable level, more or less. And we control most of the areas, more or less."

He appeared troubled about what could lie ahead.

Seyoum had been one of the main negotiators in the U.S.-sponsored talks, held in May of 1991, in which it was agreed that Eritrea would hold a referendum on independence, supervised by the United Nations, next year. So I asked him what, in his view, the outcome would be, and if Eritrea did opt for independence what this would mean for a landlocked Ethiopia, which would lose its vital ports on the Red Sea.

"The referendum is the only viable option for Eritrea," he said. "The only other option is going to war, and that didn't work for thirty years, and it's not going to work now. If there are still those in Ethiopia who think we have to fight to keep Eritrea in, they are simply not realistic. And if the Eritreans vote for independence it's not the end of the road. There is a lot of interdependence between us in economic and financial matters, and there will be further economic integration, and some form of political coöperation as well. We have also secured access to the Red Sea ports."

Before leaving, I asked the Minister what was being done to guarantee that a reign of terror like Mengistu's would never happen again.

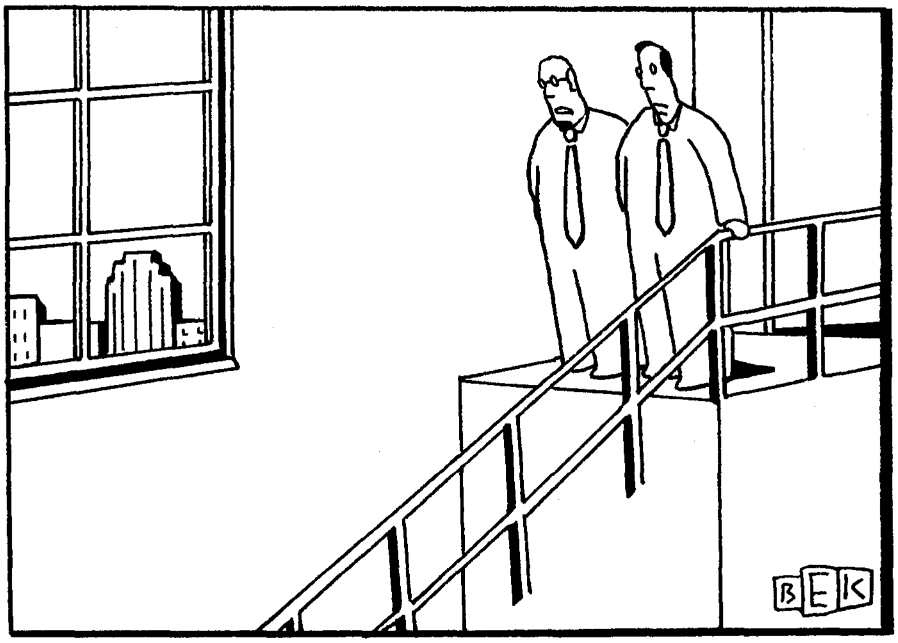
"That's the most important question we face," he replied. "There has been a lot of criticism from human-rights organizations that we've delayed the trials of both the civilian and the military officials of the Dergue. Our most important decision hasn't been whether to try these men or not but how to try them properly, so that lessons can be learned. We want to try them before an independent judiciary, not before kangaroo courts. We're setting up the judicial system now, and an independent prosecutor has been named." He went on to say that he expected the system to be established by the end of the year, and shortly thereafter the trials could begin.

"How many will be tried?" I asked.

"About a thousand are now under arrest," he replied. "Many thousands have been released on bail. Those in prison are only the top civilian and military officials, who had access to policymakers or were policymakers themselves."

"Will Mengistu be extradited from Zimbabwe and tried?"

For the only time during our interview, the Minister responded, "No comment."



"So Jones really did take the stairs."

The Grand Hall of Trinity Cathedral—once the religious seat of the imperial court—is lofty and light, and the early-morning sun was streaming through its stained-glass windows when Lady Yeshimmabet, Rahel, and I arrived for the noblemen's funeral. A choir of bearded and vested deacons, holding silver crosses and silver-headed rods, recited the Scriptures from behind an iconostasis inlaid with gold. On either side of them, facing away from the hall, were two canopied thrones, which had been covered with black cloth at the time of Haile Selassie's death, seventeen years ago.

The Emperor's remains, which are temporarily stored in a plain wooden coffin in a church basement on the Grand Palace's grounds, were to have been buried four days earlier, on the centenary of his birth. But quarrels within the family of his only surviving son—Crown Prince Asfa Wossen, who proclaimed himself Emperor Amha Selassie I in 1989, despite a massive stroke sixteen years before that left him paralyzed and unable to speak—and between the family and the transitional government, over where the Emperor would be buried, and under what circumstances, led to an indefinite postponement of the burial. It also brought to the surface divisions within the royal family on who was best qualified to succeed to the throne. The royal legacy that Haile Selassie bequeathed to his family was as splintered and shattered as his old kingdom was.

I remembered something that a Western ambassador had told me earlier. When I asked him if Ethiopia's monarchy would ever be restored, he had replied, "I've seen no one in this country, aside from a fledgling monarchist party, who has any nostalgia for the return of the crown. The Emperor had betrayed a lot of people, and was highly discredited in the end. The idea that the Crown Prince—or what *do* they call him?—will come back and sit happily on the throne is sheer nonsense. Most Ethiopians view the monarchy as quaint and irrelevant."

Glancing around the cathedral, I saw Princess Sara, who was sitting with her youngest son, Prince Beeide Mariam, who she had hoped would one day assume the throne, until his grandfather signed the arrest warrant that sent him to the End of the World. I saw Princess Seble, who was burying both her only brother—Rear Admiral Iskender Desta, the Emperor's grandson—and her husband, Dejazmatch Kassa Wolde-Mariam, a highly regarded intellectual, and the Emperor's grandson-in-law. Both of their arrest warrants had been signed by the Emperor as well. Princess Rebecca arrived, supporting a ninety-two-year-old aunt. Then I saw Aster Asfaw, the widow of Haile Selassie's chief of staff. She had told me an extraordinary story, of how she had trekked for thirteen days through the Ethiopian desert to Djibouti, disguised as a nomad, with her three young children, in order to save their lives. They had been robbed by brigands and smugglers, and had hidden in rocky crevices to avoid Cuban troops. As they moved deeper and deeper into the desert, escorted by a Somali guide, everything became increasingly bleak and stark. The only thing that connected them with Addis were the lights of Mengistu's Army camps, twinkling in the dark.

As the priests chanted in Ge'ez, an extinct ecclesiastical language, and clouds of incense swirled above the altar, I remembered something that Rahel had said a few days before. When their husbands were killed, nearly all the women of Haile Selassie's court had taken Holy Communion vows never to remarry. They were in their forties then, and many were the beauties of the court. Now their faces were lined, and their hair had turned gray. Most of them were well educated and had owned country estates, coffee plantations, or other properties in their own right. But they had been groomed to marry and raise families; it was around their families that their lives had revolved. And then, in a moment, everything stopped. They lost their husbands; their homes and lands were confiscated; they had no income. Then they began losing their children as well; they were force-marched to the provinces on the *zamacha;* they were imprisoned; or they were shot. But the women of the old imperial court were determined that they were not going to be broken. And they weren't.

Abuna Paulos appeared from behind the altar, dressed in a deep-purple robe and defiantly carrying a sceptre that the Dergue had confiscated from him more than a decade ago. He was accompanied by scores of priests in black silk robes, bearers carrying brilliant parasols, and novitiate monks, who moved rhythmically, swaying back and forth, to the beating of large leather drums. As we followed the Patriarch out of the cathedral to the burial site on its grounds, I could have been back in a medieval kingdom, with its ruling triad of king, army, and church; or back in a time when the Tigreans had their own emperors and the Oromos their own kings; or back in Haile Selassie's imperial court. They all fused together, and all seemed equally remote.

Leaving the funeral party, I joined the ambassadorial corps on the balcony of the cathedral, and looked out across the grounds at a crowd of some ten thousand who had come to pay their final respects. I remembered what the Patriarch had said: Every Ethiopian has been damaged or hurt. Hundreds of thousands have died. The fifty-six who had served the Emperor loyally in his imperial court and, as a consequence, had been executed inside Akaki Prison were merely the first.

The route to the burial site was lined with men—the noblemen's grandsons, fellow-prisoners, friends, and staff—who stood shoulder to shoulder, holding the victims' ceremonial crowns, their medals and photographs. Slowly, in cadence, the pallbearers appeared, carrying eight simple pine coffins, each draped with the Ethiopian flag. Behind them came the women in black—indistinguishable forms that became smaller and smaller as they reached the grave site and were engulfed by the swelling crowd.

The government had sent no official delegation to the funeral, but here and there I saw Tigrean guerrillas with their Kalashnikovs, providing security on the perimeters of the crowd. There were fears that Mengistu's armed supporters could attempt to retrieve the bodies even now.

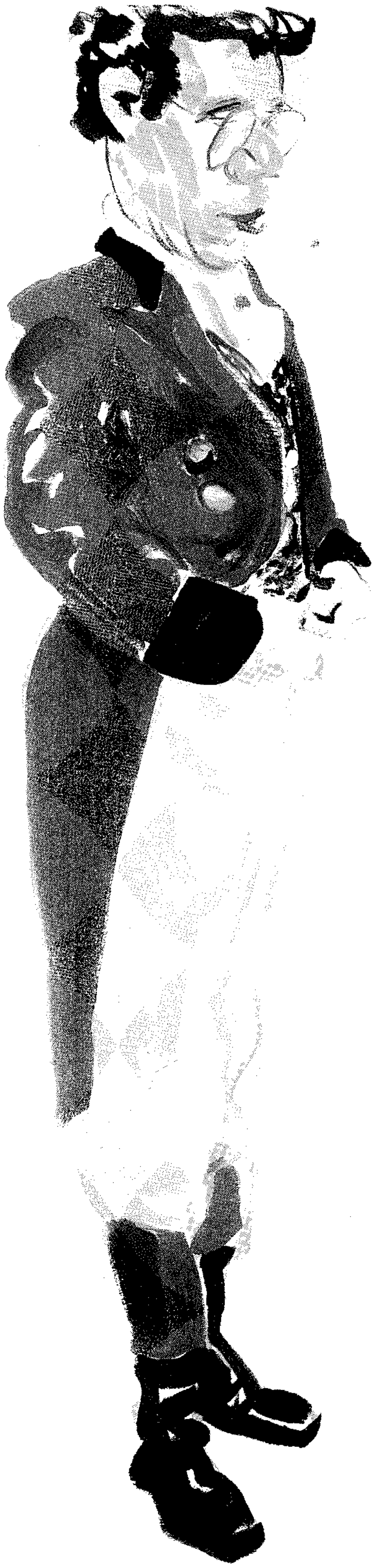
When the ceremony was over, I went in search of Lady Yeshimmabet. She was standing, elegant and erect, under a canopy, waiting for her car. "God is kind to us," she told me. "But it has been so long . . . and so many men, in so few coffins." Her voice trailed off.

I found Rahel a few feet away, tears streaming down her cheeks. She took my hand, and as we walked toward our car she said, "After eighteen years, it's no longer anti-revolutionary to cry." ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE

THE BIG APPLE CIRCUS

by Philip Burke



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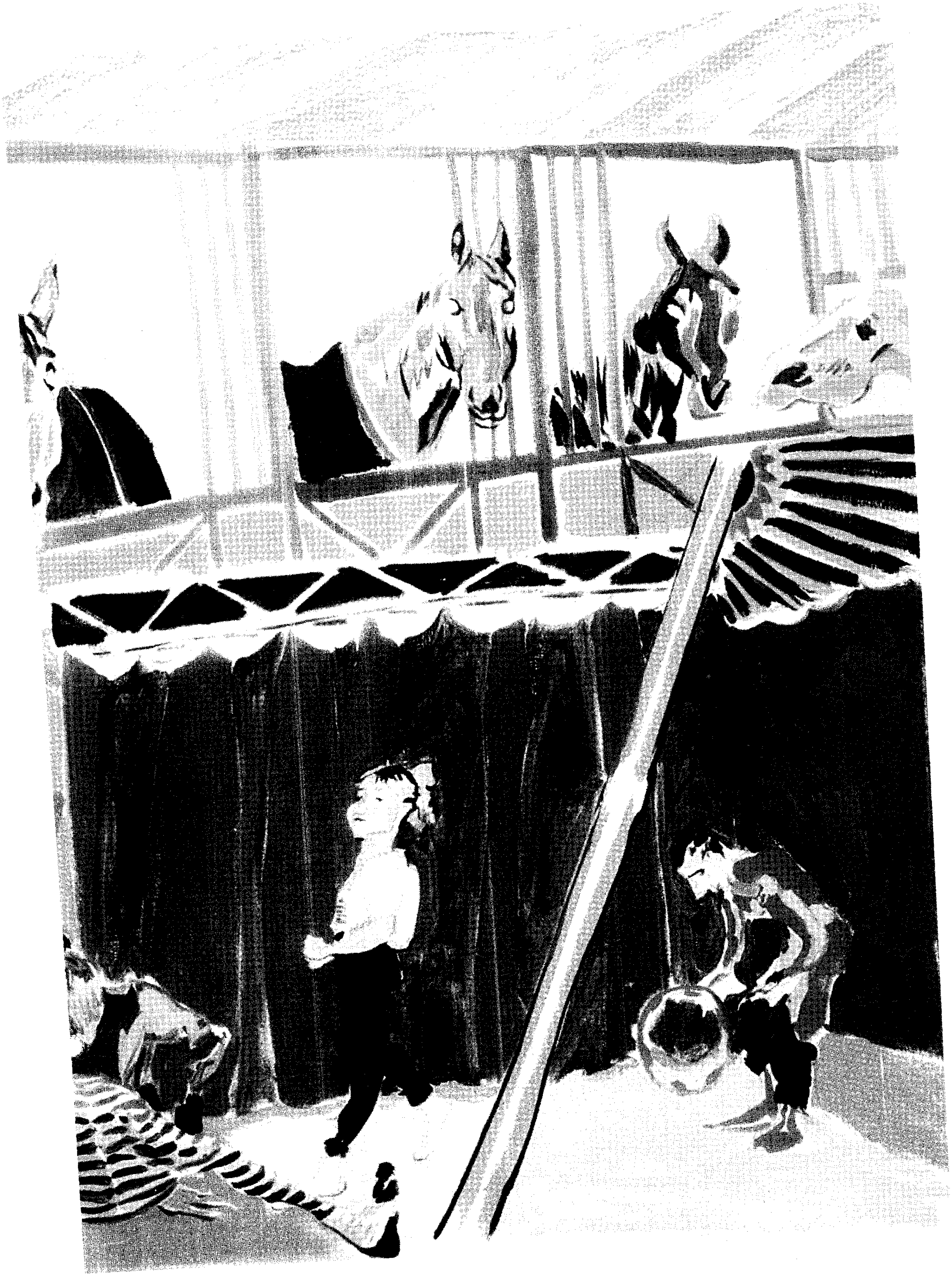


REMEMBERING MR. SHAWN

The news of William Shawn's death was followed by a flood of tributes and grateful reminiscences sent to this magazine from around the world. The following is a selection of thoughts about him by various New Yorker writers and artists and editors, who are typical only in that each felt that he or she had enjoyed a special and irreplaceable relationship with the man. Mr. Shawn himself would never have permitted this accolade, and he would have hated even more that many letters, by necessity, had to be left out.

ALMOST every day at one-thirty, William Shawn had lunch in the Rose Room of the Algonquin: orange juice, coffee with hot milk, Special K, or, once in a blue moon, toasted pound cake. Occasionally, he ate alone; more often, he was with a friend or a writer; and once in a while he asked one of his editors to join him. No matter how early you tried to get there, he was always waiting in a chair in the lobby, and he would jump to his feet, shake your hand, and inquire after your health, even though he had probably passed you in the office only half an hour before. The headwaiter, would lead the way to the rosy banquette in the right-hand corner, pull out the table so Shawn could scoot in (he always sat on the left), and hand out the menus. That was the next hurdle: what to order. Did you follow Shawn's example, and stick to breakfast food, or could you pig out with a salad? And then there was the problem of small talk: what did you *say*? Actually, you could say almost anything. Shawn was up on music, movies, late-night TV (he was a big fan of "Saturday Night Live"), and, of course, writing. And what he didn't know he was endlessly curious about.

A sip of coffee, a nibble or two, and then he would push his plate aside, cross the fourth and fifth fingers of his left hand (cross them without using his other hand, that is; try it), and turn to what he cared about most: the magazine. Shawn carried a list inside his breast pocket—a piece of copy paper folded lengthwise and covered with notes in his tiny, feathery handwriting—and sometimes he would pull it out and consult it, crossing off items one by one with a silver mechanical pencil. More often, he referred to the much larger agenda that he carried around inside his head, and would pick up exactly where he had left off at the last lunch, weeks earlier. Much of what he and I talked about had to do with scheduling, a job to which Shawn brought hundreds of calculations and considerations: not only what had been tentatively slated for the upcoming weeks' issues but book deadlines looming on the horizon, his knowledge of which writer might be blocked or discouraged and could use the boost of seeing something in print, and his uncanny sense of what could keep and what couldn't. He was almost never satisfied, and was determined that the next issue would be an improvement. Months, even years, later, he would regret that this or that piece hadn't been better—that there hadn't been more time or more space. Once, he told me that, after twenty years, he still had second thoughts about "In Cold Blood," and almost wished he hadn't published it. But the pieces that had particularly pleased him—and there were hundreds of those—he could recall in exact detail, and his face would light with pleasure just at the thought of them.

On rare occasions, after he had paid the check (he always left an enormous tip) Shawn would have a second cup of coffee and talk about *The New Yorker* in a way that seemed to erase the decades, so that it was as if "Silent Spring," say, and "Franny and Zooey" and "Eichmann in Jerusalem" and "Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu" and "The Fate of the Earth" had all been written and published at almost the same instant; and it was at such moments that you understood that all along he had also been working on another magazine: not just the next week's issue but a kind of perfect, Platonic *New Yorker*. Or, rather, on a single, vast omnibus issue, in which everything he had ever published or hoped to publish—from the tiniest newsbreak to the longest multipart chronicle—stood in ideal relationship to everything else, and in which the art sparkled, the poems sang, the fiction made you laugh or weep, the reporting pieces told you things and took you places you had never imagined.

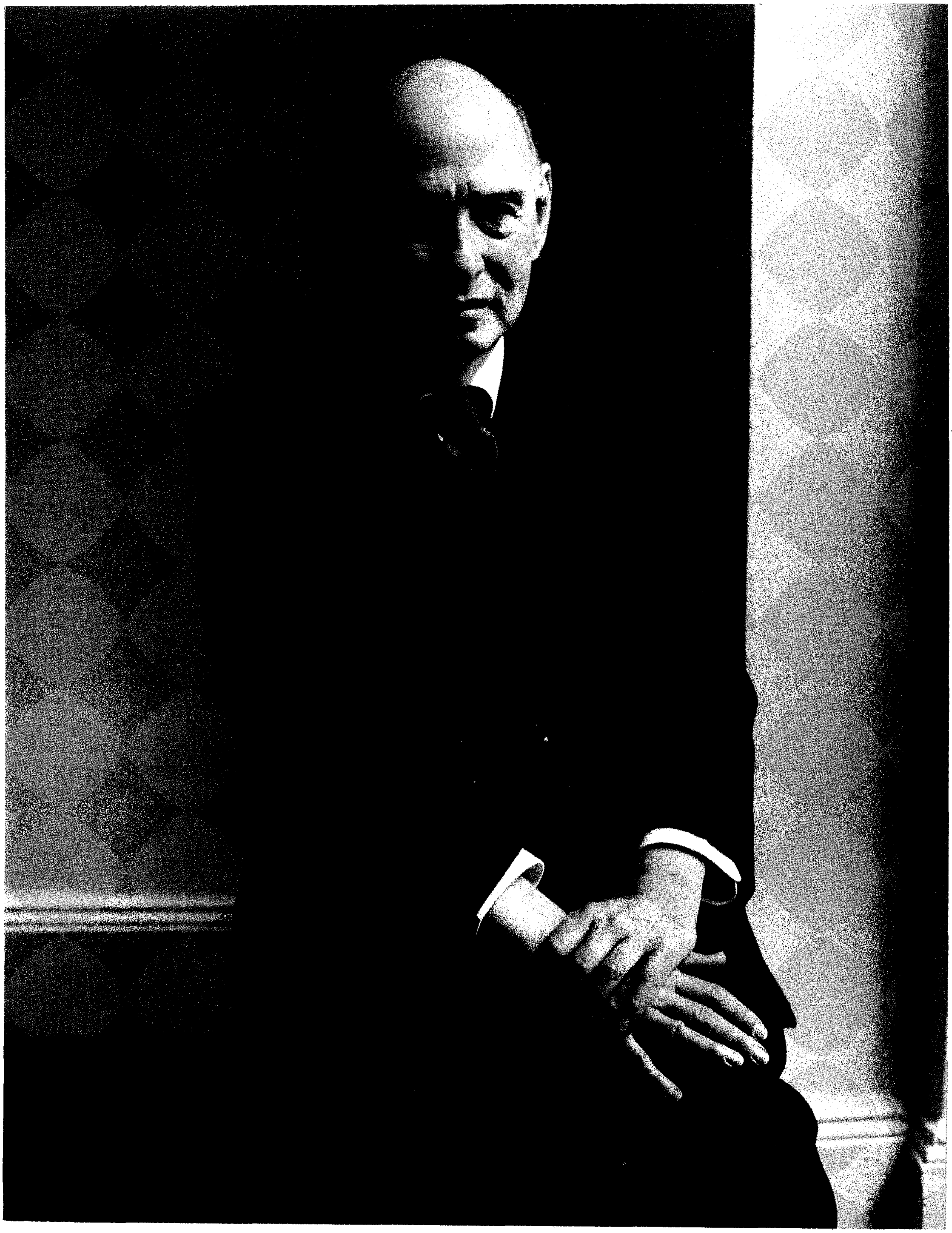
Shawn never—or not that I ever saw—had a third cup of coffee. He folded his napkin, slid off his seat, walked over to the coat-check woman in the lobby and gave her two dollars (even if it was summer, and he had only checked his hat), and went back across the street to work.

—CHARLES MCGRATH

THE way William Shawn edited the early Dancing columns is something I shall never forget. I would hand him my copy—he insisted that I bring it to him myself—and he would hand me the *Times* or something else to occupy me for the dismayingly short time it took him to peruse my pages. After he finished, he would fold his hands and say, "Just let me see if I understand you correctly." Then he would recite the piece back to me in his own words, adding nothing and changing nothing, and simply by emphasizing a point here or a transition there he would impart a logic and a clarity to my thoughts which I had not given them, and so let me understand what corrections I had to make. He was a marvellous, intuitive editor, with an extraordinary sympathy for the way writers worked. He seemed to know how much farther I could still go in a piece and how not to interfere with the process. I would say that this sympathy, this restraint, was the essence of his editorial gift, and it was the mark of *The New Yorker* under his editorship.

Shawn's forbearance was not always saintly; he could turn it into long-sufferingness and use it as a weapon. He always read every word of every issue. Occasionally, after he had passed Dancing on to other editors, he would call me and, in the most gentle yet unmistakably affronted tones, voice an objection. I adored Yiddish slang ("glitz," "dreck," "schmooze"); he did not. He disliked obfuscation of any kind. Once, I reviewed a dance film in the form of a lampoon, thinly disguised (I thought) as

JANET MALCOLM



praise. Shawn killed it, saying, in that infinitely sorrowful way of his, that no one would get the joke and, besides, critical departments were not the place for humorous writing. I loved the review, had split my sides writing it, and was determined to publish it in the next collection of my work. When the time came, I got out the old galleys and was mortified: nothing made sense, and it wasn't a bit funny. Shawn had prevailed, as he often still does in what I write. I hear the little voice saying "Uh, Miss Croch-uh?" He called me Miss Croch-uh, I called him Mr. Shawn. That was our relationship.

—ARLENE CROCE

JOURNALISTS like to think of themselves as tough birds, old pros. It's a business, this writing game, and when you finish this piece it's time to go on and knock off the next one. But Shawn, who was as tough as manganese-molybdenum in some ways, knew better. He had somehow perceived that writers are desperately in need of praise for their work—wild for it. The hard creative process, even when it's only getting things down on paper for a magazine, isn't just another line of work but also represents the writer's semi-neurotic need to rearrange the world and set it out in more orderly and appetizing forms. It's something a child would do, and children can never get enough praise, particularly if it comes in the form and person of an adult who will give them full attention: attention beyond measure. Praise makes them grow and go on, and those who bestow it are remembered vividly, even after they are gone.

—ROGER ANGELL

MR. SHAWN was strange. I used to think that what I liked best about him was what any writer who had his attention might have liked best—the way he bestowed himself, his courtesy, his nurture, his confidence that you could occasionally be persuaded to satisfy not him, precisely, but the writer you wanted to be. But now that he is gone I think that what I really liked best about Mr. Shawn was the way he made you feel that you were the only one who knew exactly *how* strange he was. Getting to love Mr. Shawn wasn't hard. He wasn't simply a genius—he was a genius at *your* disposal. Getting to know Mr. Shawn was hard. It took time, and it occurred at his discretion, and for me it had to do with small, strange confessions that in the end amounted to a kind of intimacy.

Mr. Shawn had fantasies. He had fantasies of harm. He thought there were writers (and artists and editors) on Forty-third Street—the ones with tenuous appreciation, the ones who didn't understand the magazine—who were going to run amok with self-interest or self-deception and attack "the magazine," which was his way of saying himself, with guns or fists or tennis racquets or, worse, phone calls. I thought of those people as our secret. Now I know that many of us shared that secret—only, the lists were different, and some of them no doubt included me.

Mr. Shawn had fantasies of democracy. Once, when I was in a jam, reporting abroad, and needed to get out fast, Mr. Shawn called the State Department to see about putting me on an American military plane that flew daily from a nearby base. He called Washington every day, and never got anywhere, and when I was finally able to talk to him and ask whom, precisely, he had called, he said, "Why, Miss Kramer, it was the Office of Citizens Services." I said, "Mr. Shawn, did you tell them who you are?" And he said no, of course not, he had simply told the nice woman at Citizens Services that he was "a concerned citizen." He thought it was a terrible thing that a concerned citizen couldn't get anywhere with the United States government, while a Mr. Shawn could.

Mr. Shawn never came right out and said that he didn't like something I had written. He always said that someone who didn't understand the magazine hadn't liked it. Once, he told me, slyly, that someone who didn't understand the magazine thought that my Paris concierge—a Portuguese peasant I was fond of quoting on lofty European problems—was "getting to be a laughingstock." We laughed about that ourselves, about people not understanding. And then I went home and wondered if maybe my concierge shouldn't be retired—at least, from print—and then, of course, I retired her. Occasionally, after that, Mr. Shawn would ask me about her, shaking his head, acknowledging my lame excuses about why my concierge had vanished from the magazine, but never, of course, suggesting that I reinstate her. He got what he wanted, and what he wanted was always what was best—for himself, for the magazine, for me.

—JANE KRAMER

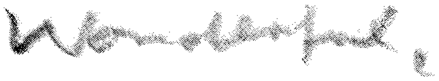
AT a party at Jack Kahn's, in 1939 (I think), someone was playing "Star Dust" on the piano, and I said to the man next to me, "That's my least favorite song in the world," and Bill Shawn replied, "That's my least favorite song, too." Thus began the twin strains of music and what I can only call "benign mendacity" that pervaded our friendship for more than fifty years. (We both knew that "Star Dust" was a good song.) When, in the fall of 1947, Bill Shawn asked me to work at *The New Yorker*, I graciously replied, "You're crazy," and then, having accepted, said I had only one stipulation—that he never ask me to write anything. "O.K.," he replied, and there followed heaven knows how many anonymous book notes of mine. When, in 1961, he asked me to review movies for fifteen weeks, I cursed and accepted. So much for mendacity. The strain of music was unceasing and glorious—music by a kind of house combo, with Bill Shawn at the piano, his son Wallace on violin, his son Allen on recorder or clarinet, and Whitney Balliett on drums. When his sons grew up and moved away, we were back to his piano solos: his Gershwin and Rodgers made everyone else's sound tame. Even up to a few months ago, I would call Cecille Shawn late at night, and she would put the phone at her end on top of the piano, so I could listen. It wasn't very long ago that I told Cecille I could not imagine a world that was not presided over by William Shawn. I still can't.

—EDITH OLIVER

CONSIDERING that the extent and the inventiveness of his editorial accomplishment are probably unmatched, it will surely do no harm to remember his oddities as well: That you could not hope to bow him out of an elevator ahead of you. That on an idyllic Indian-summer day he would arrive at the office in a heavy winter overcoat and a woollen scarf, warding off pneumonia. That at social functions he hovered near the door and vanished through it when you weren't looking. That he was a compulsive punctuator.

When he sat down to read a story in galleys, it had already been punctuated lovingly by the writer, and that punctuation had been subjected to close scrutiny by whichever editor had sent the story to the copy editor, and by the copy editor, who had marked it for the printer. But this didn't stay his pencil. He confessed once that he could not read without putting in punctuation where he felt it was needed. He believed that all prose should be punctuated for clarity and logic according to rules that are set forth in Fowler's "Modern English Usage" and are as applicable to one piece of writing as to another, this to prevent possible misreading. Fiction writers, of course, have other things on their minds—the emotional effect of a pause or an unbroken run of words, the establishing of a recognizable voice, and so on, including their own prejudices, which they will fight to the death for. As I wore out one Artgum eraser after another sparing them from commas, semicolons, and dashes that Shawn believed important, and even necessary, it did occur to me that this could be taken for insubordination. Sooner or later, I would think, it is bound to happen: I will be called into his office and . . . I never was.

—WILLIAM MAXWELL


Wonderful.

1986. Pencil on piece of typing paper. Detail from Mr. Shawn's response to a story that the Fiction Department had sent him (prob. one of several that week). Handwriting magnified 10.5x.

—VERONICA GENG

HE was reputedly squeamish, a little shy about gore in any form. He liked his cornflakes well done. When I was in the process of writing a piece about a woman who collected road kills and skinned them out for a university but ate their bodies for her own nourishment and pleasure, his hovering image, to say the least, was never out of mind. He would be Reader No. 1. I had not known of my subject's diet when I proposed the story to him. Now he would decide whether the piece would appear in the magazine. The pan-fried snakes and the weasels en brochette had to get past him.

I sent him the manuscript expecting it to remain in that state forever. After a while, he called. "Well," he said, "I liked your story . . ." He broke off for a long pause. Then he said, "No. I didn't like your story. I could hardly read it. But that woman is closer to the earth than I am. Her work is significant. I'm pleased to publish the piece."

A year or two later, writing about Alaska, I mentioned the truly dreadful packaged food that I had eaten on a government expedition in the Brooks Range, including things like freeze-dried eggs and cold pink-icinged pop tarts with raspberry filling. I also mentioned that the forest Eskimo of the Kobuk Valley were especially fond of the fat that lies behind a caribou's eye. I posed this question: "To a palate without bias—the palate of an open-minded Berber, the palate of a travelling Martian—which would be the more acceptable, a pink-icinged pop tart with raspberry filling (cold) or the fat gob behind a caribou's eye?" The editor of the piece was Robert Bingham, but there was always something known as "the Shawn proof." In the margin beside that great philosophical question Shawn had written, in his small hand: "The pop tart."

He understood the disjunct kinship of creative work—every kind of creative work—and time. The most concise summation of it I've ever heard was seven words he said just before closing my first Profile and sending it off to press. It was 1965, and I was a new young writer, and he did not entrust new writers to any extent whatever to other editors. He got the new ones started by himself. So there we were—hours at a session—discussing reverse pivots and backdoor plays and the role of the left-handed comma in the architectonics of basketball while *The New Yorker* hurtled toward its deadlines. I finally had to ask him, "How can you afford to use so much time and go into so many things in such detail when this whole enterprise is yours to keep together?"

He said, "It takes as long as it takes."

As a part-time writing teacher, I have offered those words to a generation of students. If they are writers, they will never forget them.

—JOHN MCPHEE

DURING my first conversation with William Shawn, in 1974, he astonished me by extending an invitation to work for *The New Yorker*. I was twenty-three years old, a bright-green rookie, and far from convinced that I was a writer, much less a writer worthy of Shawn's nurturing indulgence. There have been few, if any, days since when I have not thought of him, always with gratitude and wonder—often with more complicated emotions—and asked myself what the hell this whole thing has been *about*.

Several years ago, I dedicated a book to him and wrote an introduction in which I recalled the exhilaration of being young, peripatetic, and in possession of the freedom to explore, as a reporter, whatever it was that aroused my curiosity—a freedom that Shawn had granted me. Carte blanche. It was a freedom, I'm convinced, that Shawn, vicariously, found equally exhilarating. He taught me that it was possible to write well only about subjects that truly engaged one's passions, and he understood that, as an editor, he had an obligation to subordinate his own passions—that what mattered most was the specific piece of writing on the page.

He had an oracular presence, and virtually every encounter with him felt loaded, full of intrigue and possibility. Often, seated in his office, studying his impassive expression as I babbled away about this or that, I had to restrain the impulse to blurt "Mr. Shawn, I love you." I did love him and I still do. I loved him, though I never for a moment imagined that in some everyday, familiar sense, we were actually friends.

Occasionally, late on a day when I had submitted a Talk of the Town story, my phone would ring.

"Hello, Mr. Singer."

"Hello, Mr. Shawn."

"That's an ingenious and wonderful piece you wrote."

"Thank you very much."

"Thank you for doing it."

No, please, thank you. Again, though certainly not for the last time, thank you.

—MARK SINGER

THIS curious, complicated, fascinating man—unlike anyone else I have ever known—often gave the impression of being totally and mysteriously detached from the grit and dross of ordinary human beings. He worked so hard and seemed so durable that many of us fooled ourselves into thinking that he would live forever. Of course, this was nonsense, but nobody wanted to admit it. Beneath the soft voice and the elaborate manners, Shawn was a most passionate fellow, and his greatest passion was words. To Shawn, words meant thought, civilization, decency. Words were the linchpins of a just and orderly society. He approached words with caution and deep respect. Certain words appeared to make him almost physically ill and were instantly stamped out, but when someone handed him words strung together in graceful sentences that touched his mind and heart he experienced the joy that many feel when they hear a Bach sonata. Somehow, by encouraging his writers to feel free, to be bold and truthful, he brought them to the peak of their powers.

I worked with him from 1939 until 1987, often from the initial proposal of an idea (he grasped ideas with the speed of light) through the cherished phone call of acceptance and through galley and page proofs. These sessions were mostly brief and businesslike: a word here, a nuance there, a fact to be further clarified. But there is one evening in the late forties that is indelibly impressed on my mind. I had written a long report on a visit to the Argentina of Juan Perón. The narrative ended with Señor Perón unexpectedly introducing me, as he opened elegant French doors in the Presidential palace in Buenos Aires, to Evita Perón. I wrote that I took her hand and found it "stone cold." Shawn and I were going over the proof. The time was around 10 P.M. He became agitated. " 'Stone cold,' " he said, "requires a hyphen."

I became agitated. "Put a hyphen there and you spoil the ending," I said. "That hyphen would be ruinous."

"Perhaps you had better sit outside my office and cool off," he said. "I'll go on with my other work."

I took a seat outside his office. From time to time, he would stick his head out and say, "Have you changed your mind?"

"No hyphen," I replied. "Absolutely no hyphen." I was quite worked up over the hyphen.

Sometime around two-thirty in the morning, Shawn said, wearily, "All right. No hyphen. But you are wrong."

We remained dear friends, hyphen or no hyphen, to the end.

—Philip Hamburger

WHEN Shawn, then managing editor, hired me, in June, 1942, the day after I graduated from Swarthmore, he explained that I was the first woman to join the staff as a Talk of the Town reporter. When Harold Ross also mentioned this distinction to me, it was in a grumbling voice; later, he adapted nicely. The Second World War was going on by then, of course, and any men hired were likely to be drafted, so the move had been forced on Ross. I had come along at a lucky moment. Shawn made it clear that the development suited him fine. There were perhaps only four or five women regularly in the office in those days. Ross, for example, had always had men secretaries. He explained that women were forever quarrelling among themselves. When I told this to Shawn, he laughed out loud—not something I heard him do often.

I have heard that the transition from calling him Mr. Shawn to calling him Bill was a rather stately process, but this was not my experience. Sometime in 1945, I became Andy, and the editorial notes were signed "Love, Bill." While I was reporting from Europe after the war ended, and we communicated with our offices by a system called Press Wireless, it caused a small stir when the dispatches from *The New Yorker* came back signed "Love, Bill." Shawn's reputation as a formal person was well known even then. I didn't think of it as important—just an affectionate gesture from a much older editor. It was some time before I realized that when I met him he was thirty-four years old and that the magazine was only seventeen years old—just begun, really. I'm not sure how he would feel about all the editorials and headlines that used the word "gentle" to describe him. When he was challenged (especially by someone who was not a writer), his voice could be steely and his expression very angry. He was a strong and powerful man, and he never forgot it.

—Andy Logan

MR. SHAWN was seventy-four when I arrived at *The New Yorker*, and I was twenty-one, but in most of the ways that mattered he was the younger man. The era, the city, and the profession seemed to demand cynicism, but he was uninfected. I started work in the early summer, and one of two Talk-story ideas I first sent him was for a piece on the Jerry Lewis Labor Day telethon, a celebrity event I suppose I wanted to ridicule. He turned that proposal down flat, but encouraged the other one—a story about a completely obscure resident of the Bronx who worked in the welfare office and rose each morning at one to write telegraphic letters to the editors of scores of newspapers advocating everything from growing ivy on skyscrapers in an effort to reduce air pollution to requiring Russian wives for American Presidents in order to decrease the risk of nuclear war. I remember Mr. Shawn's delight with the subject of that piece: when I first read him some of the man's letters, he opened his lips in an O and shook his head happily back and forth, as if to say, absolutely without irony, "Wonders never cease." I saw the same expression hundreds of other times, most reliably when I was telling him about people whose distinction was not careers, not power, but some type of pure and marvellous obsession. There was the young man who spent every day excavating the remains of the city's first subway tunnel, underneath Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn. And the fellow who had built a Hovercraft in the basement of his house so he could circumnavigate Manhattan. No other magazine would ever have printed the stories; they'd have been rejected not because they were controversial but because they weren't.

The more I got to know him, the more I realized the burdens he carried: deep worry about keeping his staff of writers content and productive; the strain of coping with a decade that politically and culturally and morally was repudiating much of what he believed in. But his nearly physical joy in a good Talk idea—in the Brooklyn dentist who suddenly became Grenada's Ambassador to the United Nations, in the intricacies of the Aroma Disc System—never faded. Chronicling such subjects was his great pleasure. Almost everything else in his magazine was weightier, and probably accounted for more of his reputation, but I think that for Mr. Shawn a Talk story was the loveliest thing in journalism.

—Bill McKibben

I THINK it was during my third week at the magazine that I tripped and fell down the worn, uneven old stairs that connected the nineteenth and twentieth floors near Mr. Shawn's office in our old building. As it happened, I was carrying several open bottles of Coke at the time, and about halfway down the stairs I collided with Mr. Shawn, spilling Coke all over him and somehow getting his fingers entangled in my Coke-sodden hair. It is impossible to convey the full extent of my horror at that moment. The sound of the bottles clattering down the stairs and our collision immediately drew everybody out of the nearby offices, and after a moment of stunned silence many hands came forward to untangle us and set us on our feet. Luckily, no one was hurt. I apologized profusely, and Mr. Shawn was, as always, a model of mandarin courtesy and solicitousness, but from then on, I think, he tended to consider me accident-prone and—did I imagine it?—always seemed to give me an unnecessarily wide berth when we passed in the hall.

A decade later, married and struggling with a difficult pregnancy, I was advised to take to my bed for a while, and ended up staying in bed for two and a half months (not such a bad state for a writer). Mr. Shawn called regularly to inquire about my health during that period. And when I told him that I was returning to work he worried that perhaps the office was not a "safe" place. Did I feel comfortable with the idea of going up and down the stairs, he asked. I assured him I did.

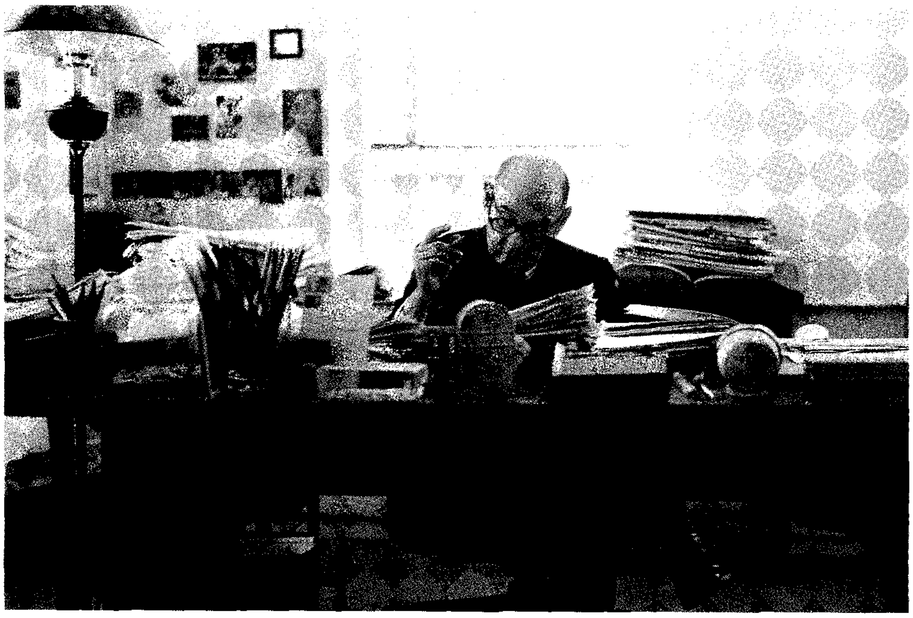
Several days later, I returned to my office, a long and rather narrow room, and found it impossible to open the door all the way. It was blocked by the corner of a standard-size twin bed, which filled at least two-thirds of my office. Mr. Shawn had ordered it, so that I could rest properly whenever I needed to, and, I'm sure, avoid physical catastrophe.

Though discreet about his feelings, Mr. Shawn was in fact passionate about creating a "safe" (in another sense of the word) atmosphere for writers, and his love of language and his empathy were so palpable that when he responded to your work he made you, the work—the world—seem tremendously richer.

—Lis Harris

Harold Ross had two favorite apothegms: "No monkey-business with the girls in the office" (he was an unreconstructed product of his time) and "Any editor worth a damn has to take a vow of anonymity." It may be that William Shawn carried anonymity one veil too far, but what appeared to be an endearing eccentricity in the modern workaday world was an invaluable tool in the world of manuscripts. Ross's dictum had been wrung from him during the war, when the draft carried off every fact editor but Ross himself and Shawn, and he had tried to turn undrafted writers into makeshift editors. The experiment was soon abandoned: the writers in wolf's clothing enraged their fellows to the point of insurrection by rewriting everything handed to them and imprinting their own style and tone on the copy.

Shawn was nothing like that. He would take a failed text, saw it up into a dozen chunks, excise the vacant musings, straighten out the thinking, fix the grammar, oil the transitions, and put it back together as an acceptable piece of work—all without leaving a trace of his presence. Only the writer ever knew that Shawn had been there, and the writer wasn't likely to tell. When I started work as an editor, in 1945, Shawn gave me as a manual of instruction a manuscript he had edited, by a writer now long and deservedly forgotten. The thing was a revelation. Every page of the typescript was black with Shawn's crabbed little corrections and transpositions, and the margins were littered with requests for more facts or better explanations. He had, it became clear, completely rewritten the piece—but always carefully using the lame writer's own language and constructions. What was astonishing was that by the time the job was done Shawn himself had vanished. There was nobody left but the writer—but now a writer who had a competent piece to offer.



JAMES STEVENSON

I suppose the same thing could be said of all of us who worked with Shawn. Whatever we were when we came into his orbit, we became something more under his influence. He sharpened our thinking, brought us sternly back from our vacant musings, oiled our transitions, and turned us into professionals of a greater competence than we would ever have achieved on our own.

—Gardner Botsford

The weekly art meeting was, and remains, one of the fixed points of *The New Yorker's* sometimes wayward compass. At two-thirty every Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Shawn and I would meet in his office to consider the week's harvest of finished drawings, rough sketches, spots, and covers. The expression with which he invariably greeted me might have suggested to an outsider apprehension at the task that lay ahead or, more frivolously, the possibility that his shoes were too tight. But in fact his painfully ceremonious manner was only a way of steering us quickly past the usual small talk to a discussion of the material at hand.

Mr. Shawn was interested in all aspects of the magazine's art and felt a personal debt to the artists who produced it. He appeared to have read and seen everything, and he would occasionally pause over a drawing to analyze some reference in it to, say, a recent Johnny Carson monologue, the sudden ascent of Arnold Schwarzenegger, or Michael Jackson's début on MTV. He was aware of most of what was happening around New York. I remember particularly his disappointment in the A.T. & T. building—the public spaces were gloomy and the seats uncomfortable—and his delight in the brazen glitz of the newly opened Trump Tower.

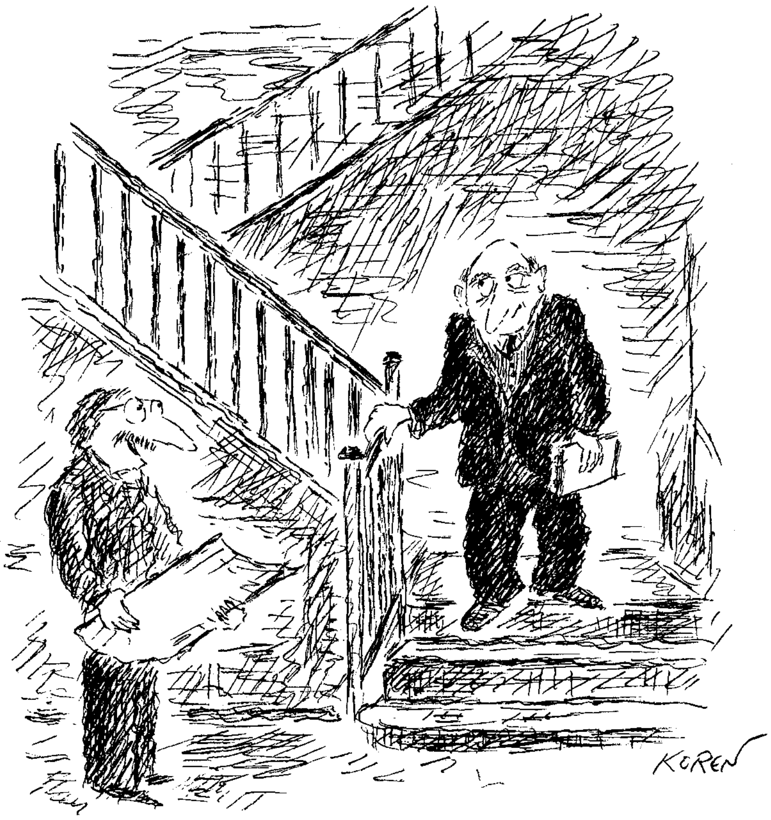
In a letter to me after he left the magazine he referred to these weekly art meetings as a search for work that was "funny, beautiful, and true." By "true" he meant not just true in its perception of the human condition but true to each artist's vision. His own tastes were conservative, but he could value and respond to truth in works not congenial to him. He immediately recognized it in, for example, the then unpublished work of Roz Chast; and, though pained, he bowed to it when he agreed to publish the words "dumb bastard" in a caption by George Booth. Mr. Shawn's ability to see to the core of each artist's creative self was the heart of his editorial gift.

—LEE LORENZ

He had an expressive, compassionate, anxious, strong-willed face framed by rather large ears. He would check himself in Lois Long's little round mirror on the wall in my office whenever he came in. His feet and his hands were long and thin, as if made for a taller person. Even in his own living room, against a backdrop of the shelves of books whose writers he had nurtured, he looked uneasy. He would sit at one end of his own sofa, looking guarded, as if he were trapped with strangers in a conveyance moving dangerously fast. His feet, in the perfectly cared-for black oxfords, would be placed neatly side by side, like the foot pedals of his Steinway. His legs would be bent to one side, with a hand resting on or perhaps holding down one of his knees. When someone said something that amused or surprised him (which was often), the hand would spontaneously lift and then settle down again in a Platonic sketch of a thigh slap. He had a great capacity for joy. Laughter was essential to his survival. His fingers were long and slightly spatulate at the tips—a pianist's hands. When he sat with a board, working on a proof with his silvery propelling pencil, all his stupendous intellect was in his hands. When he was in his shirtsleeves, he would sometimes stand with his thumbs at his belt and his fingers splayed out. It was a gesture from another time and place—a world of watch chains, and even gun belts, perhaps—and thoroughly manly and American.

—KENNEDY FRASER

Shawn was so hard a worker that he had little time for extracurricular activities. There were two I knew of. Before the war—the one he insisted that *The New Yorker* call "the Second World War" rather than "World War II"—a bunch of us met periodically in an apartment just off the Bowery to play jazz. Various musicians of different calibre drifted in and out of the performing ranks. It was generally agreed that among the regulars there were only two real pros—Larry Adler on harmonica and Bill Shawn on piano.



AFTER 20 YEARS, AT 25 WEST 43RD STREET,
BETWEEN THE 19TH AND 18TH FLOORS:
"HELLO, MR. KOREN."
"HELLO, MR. SHAWN."

EDWARD KOREN

Shawn's other outside interest, his only competitive sport, was what I guess could be called shadow wrestling. He would never precede anybody through a door. While his insistence on going last rarely involved actual physical contact, there would occasionally be a gentle nudge. He retired, as far as I know, undefeated.

—E. J. KAHN, JR.

So much to remember. A transatlantic phone call on the matter of a semicolon. The withdrawal at the last hour of a review in which I had adverted unkindly to someone whom Mr. Shawn, from private sources, knew to be ill. The rationed but all the more valued expression of pleasure at certain pieces or suggestions. The shutters slid down like a noiseless guillotine on some inappropriate reflection or on some name ostracized from regard. It became important not to ask for his support in mundane aspirations.

Mr. Shawn's exit from the magazine left scars on all who had worked with him. Profound generosities of understanding ceased overnight. Now I find it difficult to imagine that he will no longer, even away from the office that was his monkish fief, glance at what I publish. Having taught himself, he remained a teacher to his fingertips. It is that which makes his legacy a specific pressure. I shall always know that nothing I can turn out is really good enough.

—GEORGE STEINER

The first words Shawn ever said to me, after shaking my hand and asking me to sit down, were "I understand you come from a big family." I had applied for a writing job, failed to get one, moved to Chicago, worked for *Playboy*, returned to New York the next year, and tried again. I was told Mr. Shawn would see me on Wednesday afternoon at four o'clock. I got to the building about an hour early and walked back and forth outside, keeping track of the time by the big clock on the pillar at Fifth and Forty-fourth. At three minutes of four, I rode the elevator to the nineteenth floor. Someone took me to Shawn's office. All I really saw of him was a kind of rosy glow above a blue suit. When he said that about the big family, I knew I was hired. The job was reporter for the Talk of the Town, at two hundred dollars a week. The receptionist for the eighteenth floor led me to an office I could use; it had a view of the Chrysler Building. I stood there looking out the window, my happiness roaring inside like a car in neutral with the accelerator to the floor.

Shawn's handwriting, and the funny things he said—I almost never talked to him without his saying something funny or strange—and the sound of his thin, reedy voice on the phone. The greatest thrill in the world was to finish a Talk story, take it up to Shawn, come back to my office, kill time for a few minutes; then the phone would ring, and Shawn would say he liked the story. Also, there was the opposite experience: I'd give him a story that I had worked on for weeks, and never hear one word about it or see the manuscript again. The only exception happened once when I wrote a Talk piece about fishing in the Catskills. Shawn called me into his office and told me that it was a good piece. Then he said, "The reason we won't be using it . . ." and went into a long explanation in which he said that *The New Yorker* never ran articles about fishing or hunting, because it was "a vegetarian magazine." He said, "*Fishing*, in itself, is fine. But then you have the fish, and the fish is *hooked* . . ." He veiled his eyes, looked away, made a small, helpless gesture with his hand.

—IAN FRAZIER

To this contributor, Mr. Shawn's unfailing courtesy and rather determined conversational blandness hid a mystery: his extraordinary aesthetic passion, which enabled him to make so many adamant and surprising discriminations. A prodigious consumer of information and culture, he retained what he had absorbed: all the tides that had washed through his eyes and ears had polished his own cultural vocabulary to a gnomic minimalism. The word "writing" covered the whole vast business of literature, and "good writing" was the height of his praise and the extent of his commentary. An editor-in-chief, with the ultimate authority of acceptance or rejection, has a certain monolithic, or binary, simplicity, and to a striking degree Shawn declined to compromise the dignity of his power with unnecessary elaboration. Not that he was curt; on the contrary, an infinitely patient expectancy was the mood he conveyed, and it was this expectancy, grandly nondirective, that a contributor longed to satisfy. The tiny difference between your best and your second best would be registered, you were sure, in the ideally pure chambers of Shawn's personal quiet; it was part of his editorial genius to establish, in a manner akin to that of the classic Freudian psychoanalyst, an air of perfect listening, in which you were encouraged to reveal and reconstruct yourself.

Our dealings were few, but they needed only to be few. A softly spoken sentence while we passed in the hall; a compliment relayed by another editor; a friendly word scratched on a proof—these, like the lightest of touches on the tiller, sufficed to confirm that the vessel was being steered and the right direction maintained. What was right was doubly right, somehow—aesthetics and ethics coincided—in the universe of his gentle implications. His adamancy of taste had been hardened in a buried moral fire, and his *New Yorker* was a realm from which many types of unseemliness were excluded. But his exclusionary sword had an edge of venturesomeness as well: the magazine's fiction became more avant-garde and its nonfiction more mandarin under his guidance. This shy man, in his buttoned vest, concealed a mental swashbuckler who constantly kept readers and his writers on their toes. In pursuit of what he called "the real thing" he would go with a writer as far as the writer dared to go, and turned cool only when the writer played it safe, or false. Beneath a reserve that bordered on diffidence, he harbored an intensely creative, uncompromising nature. As fate willed, he placed this nature at the service of other talents, of an entire magazine, week after week. Yet his magic force made every word and comma in some sense his. He seemed to me, when I dared visit that corner office where Mr. Shawn pinkly crouched behind his proof-piled desk, a conjurer who, without moving a muscle, summoned spirits from the deep.

—JOHN UPDIKE

I BEGAN reading *The New Yorker* intermittently when I was in college, in the post-Watergate, post-Vietnam War nineteen-seventies. At the time, I didn't see much on the American scene that inspired any sense of citizenship or public commitment, and most of my peers seemed lost in some form of ironic detachment or cultic mystification. *The New Yorker* of that time, with its oxymoronic virtues of lively dignity, active calm, and disinterested engagement, and its almost ridiculously ardent devotion to accuracy and completeness, gave me a kind of hope that I rarely felt. When I finally met, and began working for, William Shawn, I recognized that it was he who had established those virtues and instilled that hope. His own hope, which was really a belief in worldly illumination, built a promontory above the flat landscape of the media-projected world, and I've never forgotten the sense of being reached for, and found, by Shawn's belief that the real world could be seen in words, jokes, and handmade pictures. He was, despite his theatrically elaborated reticence, a Whitmanesque embracer of America's inexhaustible lists of things and ways of living. (The embrace became, more and more, an international one as the years went by.) He was a blushing, nervous, hesitant, and youthful little man, touching in his faith that empathy and care could prevail, and, always, bravely independent. And I can see him shaking his head at these imprecise and emotional words.

—HAL ESPEN

ALTHOUGH Mr. Shawn was a secret person, he preferred others not to be. He wanted to know everything that was going on, but if the news was either disagreeable or embarrassing he liked it distilled through an intermediary. There was a feeling among the staff that he should be protected from the cruder aspects of life—a feeling that he shared. He was not one to get involved in personal matters, no matter how fascinating, and the legendary shyness and elaborate courtesy were also a protection, enabling The Legend to do with impunity exactly what he wanted. His curiosity was often hidden, but it was irrepressible, and he had an uncanny tendency to appear silently in the doorway just as you were doing an imitation of him getting on an elevator; or when a writer and a checker were in a tackle on the floor, the latter trying to make the point that by curling into a ball the tacklee had less chance of being injured. Or, in the middle of a raunchy story, unfit for his ears, you would suddenly look up and there he'd be. "Am I interrupting?" he'd ask, peering up at you sidewise, deadpan.

Confidence (lacking): On his way out to lunch one day, dressed in his brown porkpie hat, green scarf, black-and-white checked overcoat, white socks, black shoes, and rubbers, and carrying his umbrella, he suddenly turned and asked, "Am I a figure of fun?"

Preventive Medicine: He returned from lunch one day to find a writer waiting for him who had a terrible, noisy cold. Mr. Shawn entered putting up his umbrella.

—Mary D. Kierstead

After I'd worked for *The New Yorker* for about three years, Mr. Shawn suggested that I might want to look for another job. "You would be a great success somewhere else, I'm sure," he said near the end of his uncomfortable speech. He was sitting at his big, polished desk. I sat on the famous low couch, in despair. "Why, you could be a star," Mr. Shawn concluded. This effort at valedictory praise was compromised by his obvious distaste for the notion of any stellar entity except the astronomical. On another occasion, I asked Mr. Shawn if I could try writing a nonfiction piece. When I finished my brief, halting proposal, he said, "What you want to write is an article. We don't publish articles. The *Times Magazine* publishes articles." No diminutive ever sounded punier.

"We avoid," his Lilliputian hand noted in a galley's margin, with a spidery line leading to "smarts" or "urinal" in the text. We avoided, as I learned little by little, "photo," "intrigued" for "interested," "locate" as a synonym for "situate," "massive" as a description of anything but a physical object, "wig," for a reason that has remained a mystery to me, "home" for "house," "gadget," "feisty," "workaholic," "prestigious," "promptly," the verb "spat" as the past tense of "spit," "quality" as an adjective, "tycoon," and "balding." And it was said that Mr. Shawn wanted at all costs to avoid mentioning the name of Tom Wolfe, who in 1965 had written an unflattering piece about him and *The New Yorker* in *New York*, when it was part of the *Herald Tribune*. Eventually, some one of us composed a mnemonic to consolidate the Diction Index that Mr. Shawn carried around in his head. I could have sworn I was the one, but Nancy Franklin and John Bennet, two colleagues, have convinced me that they deserve the credit for "Intrigued by the massive smarts of the balding, feisty, prestigious, workaholic tycoon, Tom Wolfe promptly spat on the quality photo above the urinal and tried to locate his gadget." Someone evidently left the wig at his home.

During the eighteen years I worked for Mr. Shawn, I doubt if we spent more than three hours talking to each other, and yet with hardly any effort at all we managed in those three hours not to get along. Oil and water. Still, however inadvertently, he, more than anyone else, taught me how to be an editor and a writer to the degree that I am either. However grudgingly, I learned. It was impossible not to, really, when, week in and week out, I saw the intelligence and the tenacious logic, the wisdom and the innocence that Mr. Shawn brought to bear on the written language, and the deep curiosity one sensed beneath the man's formal surface. Not a day goes by that I don't use some part of Mr. Shawn's example in my professional conduct, that I don't remember his vivid character, that I am outside his influence. No one in his right journalistic or literary mind would have wanted to go somewhere else, even to write articles and to be a star.

—Daniel Menaker

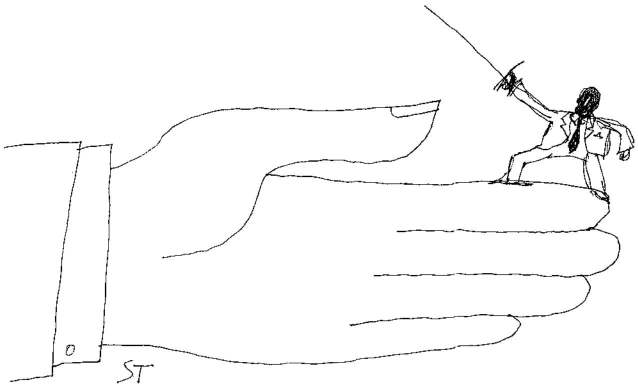
It was George Trow who brought me to Mr. Shawn. I was young and poor and hungry, and could never pay the rent on time. I did not have a real job, because I could not do anything very well. I wanted to be a writer. I didn't know how to do that, but when anyone asked me what I did, I would say I was a writer; but that wasn't true; I couldn't write at all. A man named Michael O'Donoghue introduced me to George Trow, who must have felt sorry for me, because he began to take me with him to all sorts of places around town and feed me afterward. One night, we were eating dinner in a restaurant that served only Lebanese food, and I said something about a person we knew that made George laugh very hard. And when he had stopped laughing he asked if I would like to meet Mr. Shawn, and I said yes. The three of us met for lunch at the Algonquin. I was hungry and ordered the most expensive thing I could find on the menu, a seafood salad. I don't remember what George ordered. Mr. Shawn had cornflakes, which I thought he had ordered because I had used up the magazine's lunch allowance. I talked a lot, but I cannot remember what I said to him except that I liked the way Doris Troy sang, she sounds so fucked up. I said that to him. I didn't know him at all then. I cannot remember what he said to me except that I could give writing something for the Talk of the Town a try. Months later, I attended an event; at this event, I made some notes in a small notebook George Trow had given to me; at home later, I wrote up my notes and added some impressions I had of the event. I thought Mr. Shawn would ask George to go over what I had put down, and put it into proper writing, but instead everything that I had written appeared in the magazine just the way I had written it. And when I saw that, I had a shock, because I realized then what my writing would be: the thoughts in my head, the way I thought of something, expressed in words. And that is how I came to feel that he is one of the sources of the person I have become.

—Jamaica Kincaid

"Listening to jazz," William Shawn once wrote, "has been one of the great pleasures of my life." But playing his special Fats Waller-style piano was an even greater pleasure. In the late fifties, he presided over occasional musical evenings in his apartment, on the Upper East Side. I lived nearby, and, when summoned, wheeled my drums over in a baby carriage. He always opened the front door and, at the sight of the loaded carriage, shook his head in disbelief and laughed—but it wasn't a laugh laugh. As was his way, he simply made a quick laughing sound and smiled without showing any teeth. After a buffet supper, the band assembled and took off. It generally included Shawn at his beautiful Steinway grand, Bruce Bliven on clarinet, three or four children (Wallace and Allen Shawn, Jay and Richard Hamburger) on violin, recorder, clarinet, and triangle, and me. The music was untrammelled. Sometimes the ensembles coalesced and sounded like Dixieland, and sometimes cacophony took over. The solos, often free of key, harmony, and melody, were piping and brave. All the while, Shawn sat behind his grand, jacket off, back to the wall, and played, his left hand pumping out Waller *oompahs* and his right hand doing some fancy fretwork. He watched his hands a lot, but when a child soloed he'd look up, his face glistening and pleased. Around nine-thirty, the children disappeared, and the session ended. The music, intense and very private, freed Shawn; he called me by my first name during those evenings and Mr. Balliett the rest of the forty-odd years we knew each other.

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

MR. SHAWN was open to and thrilled by people of talent, from the youngest to the oldest of them. He knew how to find the best story, the best writer, the right structure, the right sentence, the right word. I sometimes wondered how these overwhelming powers came to be vested in a man who was genuinely meek, in the Biblical sense, and was vulnerable and selfless. For me, his nature was expressed in the way I would see him pause on the street to make way for a baby carriage and then bow slightly and tip his hat to the baby.



SAUL STEINBERG

When Mr. Shawn was removed by *The New Yorker's* then fairly new owner, he was hurt, and hurt badly. But, in his usual reasonable manner, he seemed to be trying to understand the owner's action. As time went on, he would say he was trying not to feel bitter. "Bitterness serves no purpose, and it corrodes the soul," he would often say. Once, he gave me a sheet of paper on which he had just typed a few sentences. I read the following: "I have never experienced or even permitted myself to contemplate a vindictive action. I would rather carry around pain or disappointment or even the residue of bitterness for the balance of my life than to entertain a moment's vengeful thought. . . . Little bitterness remains, but that little is far too much for me. The truth is I cannot bear it. If I cannot love my enemies, I cannot breathe."

Over the past five years or so, Mr. Shawn worked in an office given to him by Lorne Michaels, the creator and executive producer of "Saturday Night Live." The office was at Broadway Video, Michaels's production and post-production company, in the Brill Building. Day after day, Mr. Shawn went to this pleasant, buzzing place, and sat at Michaels's desk, surrounded by artifacts of television and the entertainment business. He would bring all his papers with him in a fat brown leather briefcase, and would take them home at night, leaving no trace of his presence on the desk or in the typewriter. Among other things, he worked on writing fiction. His sentences, he would tell me, flowed easily and smoothly, and he experienced what other writers experience: his fingers would take over, and the writing would come as though from someone else. But, he said, sounding disappointed, he was not writing what he really wanted to write, and he was determined not to have it published. Finally, he seemed to find what he really wanted, and he started writing with hope and enthusiasm. But the physical stresses and strains of his life were by then piling up on him and soon stopped him from going on.

Four days before Mr. Shawn died, my twenty-six-year-old son, Erik, and I had a bite with him at Madison Avenue's E.A.T. Café. (As far back as I can remember, Mr. Shawn loved sitting around in a nice café.) A paperback publisher had just sent me a paragraph that had been prepared for the cover of a book. I handed the paragraph to Mr. Shawn and asked him if he would check it. He took out the mechanical pencil he always carried in his inside jacket pocket, and quickly read the paragraph. Then, hesitantly, he asked if it would be all right to make a change. I told him I would be grateful for it. With his pencil, he made his characteristically neat proofreading marks on a sentence that said the book "remains as fresh and unique as ever." He changed it to read "remains unique and as fresh as ever." "There are no degrees of uniqueness," Mr. Shawn said politely.

He was the one to know that. He embodied the meaning of the word. Later, I looked up, in the Concise Oxford Dictionary, the definition of "unique": "*a.* of which there is only one, unequalled, having no like or equal or parallel."

—LILLIAN ROSS

IN his youth, Shawn published a casual in the magazine which he later came to wish had been rejected. It appeared in 1936 and was signed only with his initials—W.S., not the most inconspicuous initials in the annals of English literature—and he took comfort in that partial concealment of his identity. The casual was an amusingly worked-out account of the sudden total destruction of New York City by a stray meteor. After the detonation of the first atomic bomb, Shawn felt that the topic could no longer be dealt with playfully and perhaps ought never to have been dealt with playfully. But playful his imagination was, whether or not he employed it in writing. I recall having lunch with Shawn one day—the usual gruel—in the course of which he developed a theory of conduct that was a merry mingling of mock science and mock philosophy. As time passes, what is the most appropriate way for us to live? Shawn proposed that we should take the number of years that in statistical terms could be thought to remain to us and then seek out a species of animal for which that number is the normal life span. We would then conduct ourselves for that number of years in approximately the same fashion that this animal does. If we have a life expectancy of fourteen years, then we should pattern ourselves after a kangaroo; if twenty-five years, then a giraffe; and so on. Shawn gave a name to this impromptu theory of his: he called it Temporarianism. As he got up from his meagre repast, he shook his head and exclaimed, "Think of it! To go down in history as the father of Temporarianism!"

—BRENDAN GILL

SOME years ago, a writer who had just emerged from his first meeting with William Shawn blurted out, "He listens!" This was said in a tone of voice the writer might have used to say something like "He conducted the entire meeting while standing on his hands!" The more I thought about it, the more I came to believe that the astonishment was justified.

When a writer was in Shawn's office, sitting on a couch otherwise occupied by piles of manuscripts, the door was closed. The phone almost never rang; when it did, Shawn took care of the call in a few seconds, and then apologized at greater length than that for the distraction. He focussed completely on the person sitting on the couch. While he listened to, say, the reasons a writer thought some subject was worth a story, he sometimes shook his head in wonderment or murmured "Really!" When he responded, it was clear that he had absorbed everything said—every fact, every allusion, every nuance. Shawn was that rare bird an inspirational listener. For thirty-five years, writers emerged from his office buoyed by the belief that at least one other human being in the world understood precisely what they were trying to get at.

I think his reputation for reclusiveness played a role in his gifts as a receiver of information: a writer who was researching a piece for *The New Yorker* had the feeling of gathering information for some terrifically intelligent, inexhaustibly curious uncle who happened to be a shut-in. Also, the writer didn't have to worry about being second-guessed by somebody at a dinner party who had third-hand information and a confident manner. Shawn wouldn't have been at the dinner party. (It is not true, by the way, that Shawn absolutely never went to parties. It would have been discourteous to ignore, say, a major gathering honoring *New Yorker* artists. On such occasions, he would arrive precisely on time, pay his respects to the guest of honor, who was probably the only other person in the room except the bartender, and flee. A writer who had encountered less midtown traffic than he expected on the way to some *New Yorker* event once said, "We got there so early we nearly saw Shawn.")

He read every word that went into the magazine, and sent along annotated galleys of each piece to the editor handling it. He handled some pieces himself—including a few of mine, when I first arrived at *The New Yorker*. He would sit behind his desk, and I would sit on the couch. "On top of Galley 3," he'd say, and as he read the sentence to me I'd realize that it was one of those sentences I'd handed in as imperfect beasts in the secret hope that they might get lost in the herd. What I found remarkable is not that he invariably put his finger on the flawed sentence but that as he read I often understood how to fix it.

It was characteristic of the way Shawn operated that he somehow led me to make the fix. His approach to editing involved what amounted to a conscious denial of ego—a characteristic so startling in the writing trade that it was, ironically, one of the bases of his fame.

—Calvin Trillin

CERTAINLY everything about him was touched with irony. He published some of the most sensitive prose the republic of letters has ever produced, but it was wedged in among some of the glossiest advertisements the world has ever seen. He was simple, natural, direct, and accessible, but the writers and artists he gathered around him tended to be temperamental, quirky, and complicated. He was aware of everybody's foibles, but, like the father of a big family, he had complete charity: his affection for his writers and artists knew no bounds. He carried the weight of the world on his shoulders, and read newspapers avidly, because he knew that *The New Yorker* was a journalistic enterprise as well as a literary one. But he always appeared relaxed and laughed easily. For thirty-five years, he selected from a mountain of manuscripts everything that went into the magazine, and read proofs of each piece, often several times, before it was published. But as a person he never gave the impression of someone under pressure or in a hurry. A man who should have had a credit line on every piece in the magazine sought no credit from anybody.

—Ved Mehta

I HARDLY got to know Mr. Shawn in the brief time we coincided at the *magazine, but as I tried to learn his job*, and to understand how *he* had done it, I began to infer who and what he was. There were contradictions. The extraordinary mechanism he had developed for putting out issue after issue of the magazine so smoothly was the achievement of a mind devoted to order and process, yet it was clear that Shawn also relied on intuition and flair—his own and his writers'. The editorial staff he had created was brilliant and reliable, and he depended on it, yet it seemed to worry him that his colleagues' very abilities might in some way muffle the direct connection between him and his writers. He was unrelenting in his insistence that everything in the magazine be accurate, clear, and, above all, judicious, yet he published work of great feeling and daring, and work that took large risks. His manner was unremittingly polite, even gentle, yet it was obvious that he was forceful and determined, and—always—in complete control.

There was, however, no contradiction in his devotion to the magazine. *The New Yorker* was for him a calling and a trust; a civilization, even—perhaps the last civilization. Many of our readers agreed with him about this, and, indeed, what ultimately moved me most about Mr. Shawn had to do with the faith that this famously private and fastidious editor had in his large public, and the reciprocal faith the public had in his magazine. Perhaps his most significant contribution to journalism lay in the triumph of his passionate and uncynical view of what a publication and its readers can mean to each other—a view unique in our time.

—Robert Gottlieb

EVERY encounter with William Shawn was a somewhat mystifyingly intense experience. You left his presence as you leave a play or a film that has taken you out of your own life and plunged you into a world that is more vivid, coherent, and *interesting* than the real world. Shawn was a great teacher, and the lesson he taught—the lesson every great teacher teaches—was the lesson of himself. He was the model and emblem of the uncorrupted intellect. T. S. Eliot's famous description of Henry James—"He had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it"—could be a description of William Shawn. He never said anything that wasn't profoundly in*telligent and utterly intelligible*. We, his students, without ever presuming to imitate him, tried to be like him in our work. We sought to eliminate from our writing the pretentiousness, intellectual shallowness, moral murkiness, and aesthetic limpness that come naturally to the pen. He was our beacon in a treacherous terrain. The thought of him ultimately reading what we had written both slowed us down and gave us courage to continue. The slowing down was the important thing. Shawn knew—and we knew he knew—that writing is a process that can't be hurried, and that each piece has its natural, sometimes preposterously long term. He taught us to be patient, and to trust our material. He had the gaiety and the playfulness that all deeply serious people have. He was an enchanting person and an Enchanter. He was our Mr. Chips and our Prospero. We have missed him and we will always miss him.

—JANET MALCOLM

WHEN someone dies, it is customary to pay tribute to his achievements and his better qualities. In the case of Mr. Shawn, there is so much—too much—to say about these. One would have to describe how he broadened and deepened the interests of the magazine until it became unique in the entire history of magazines; how, as managing editor and then as editor, he invented and thereafter supervised a radically original and bounteously successful administrative structure for the production of journalistic and literary work; how, swimming against the tide of the times, he pioneered, and persevered in, several deeply unfashionable editorial policies, such as resistance to public relations in all its forms; how, gauging the flow of that same tide, he saw the shape of things to come before they came, as if his mind dwelled in the anteroom of history, where events were taking shape and getting ready to be born; how he sent writers out to report on those events as they were occurring, years before any other editor did so; how, as an editor of writing, he seemed to change almost nothing, and yet somehow all was changed; how, while framing the broad policies of the magazine, he immersed himself in its details, with the result that in the end the policies were in fact nothing but the sum of the details, not something imposed from above; how, by virtue of a deep-rooted humility, he managed to place his prodigious mind wholly at the service of other minds, including, above all, the minds of *New Yorker* writers, so that in his presence you felt that *you* were wittier, more interesting, finer—a better person over all—than you had thought a moment before. And one would have to describe his incomparable judgment, which included what Hannah Arendt once called his "moral perfect pitch"; his courtesy, which was the outward expression of his respect for other people (Mr. Shawn was a kind of one-man civilization, and his manners were its singular manners); his fabled responsiveness, to writing, to events, and, above all, to people; and his sheer stamina, which, in its unobtrusive way, resembled nothing so much as that of some great general—a Napoleon or a Kutuzov.

All these achievements and qualities and many more would have to be described to take the measure of our loss, and they should be, because there is so much to learn from his life about how to run a magazine, how to think about the world and live in it, and how to be a human being. It's disturbing to those who knew him to realize that the world now goes its way unwatched by him. But at this moment, when the shock and heartache of his death are fresh, what I want above all to remember are certain other things. I want to remember the delicacy and gentleness—almost a kind of tenderness—with which he treated everyone in his presence: family, friends, and colleagues. His feeling for the people he worked with was personal. One reason, I suspect, that he shunned publicity and found it distasteful to hold meetings with more than a few people (and most of the time there was just one other person) is that he had no "professional" self to call upon for such occasions. For him, everything was personal. His devotion to his colleagues was unqualified. This devotion was instantly visible in his glance—shy but dead level—whenever, rosy-cheeked and blue-suited, he appeared in one's doorway. It was a glance so filled with affectionate, alert, and intelligent attention that you could dwell in it, and a few generations of people who worked at *The New Yorker* did dwell in it. The attention did not falter when, as so often had to be the case, it fell on someone who was unhappy or in anguish. Part of his responsiveness was his immediate, great-hearted reaction to people's suffering. He received news of someone's divorce, illness, bereavement, or other sorrow as if it were a physical blow. He would slump back in his chair, his shoulders would fall, his face would lose color, and he would emit an "Oh, no!" that was near a sob. Because his life consisted in large measure of watching over several hundred lives, the blows came often. This unlimited fellow-feeling, this love, was of a piece with his genius as an editor, and, perhaps, was at the heart of it.

He had the highest expectations and the highest standards of anyone I have ever met. Such a person might have been forbidding. But he was sweet, patient, forbearing, steadfast, and kind. To be in his company was a delight, a joy. Along with everything else, he was a magical man. In twenty years of working with him, every time I heard his distinctive, soft, sliding footfall in the corridor, my heart lifted in happiness.

—JONATHAN SCHELL

ON February 12, 1987, the day before he left *The New Yorker*, William Shawn wrote this letter to the staff:

Dear colleagues, dear friends:

My feelings at this perplexed moment are too strong for farewells. I will miss you terribly, but I can be grateful to have had your companionship for part of my journey through the years. Whatever our individual roles at *The New Yorker*, whether on the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth floor, we have built something quite wonderful together. Love has been the controlling emotion, and love is the essential word. We have done our work with honesty and love. *The New Yorker*, as a reader once said, has been the gentlest of magazines. Perhaps it has also been the greatest, but that matters far less. What matters most is that you and I, working together, taking strength from the inspiration that our first editor, Harold Ross, gave us, have tried constantly to find and say what is true. I must speak of love once more. I love all of you, and will love you as long as I live.

WILLIAM SHAWN

JAMES STEVENSON

THE DIPLOMATIC LIFE

MR. AMBASSADOR! BOB STRAUSS COMES HOME

by Marie Brenner

At the last formal dinner that Ambassador Robert Strauss gave in the melancholy grandeur of Spaso House, in Moscow, he showed little sign of the alienation he had felt for much of the fifteen months he served in Russia. Like many of his predecessors, Strauss had contradictory feelings about coming home. The entire time he was in Russia, he spoke of being "out here," as if to underscore his isolation, but in his final days he was at times pensive and darkly introspective, proprietary about the country's future, as if the grim realities of the new Russia had got to him. The Yeltsin government and the entire reform movement were in peril. The dizzying rate of inflation had inevitably led to comparisons to the Weimar Republic. Although CNN often filmed the Coca-Cola kiosk in front of the Lenin Museum for its requisite "*perestroika*" visual moment, the truth was that a six-pack of Coke cost the equivalent of an average monthly salary. The long, cold winter was settling in. As the Congress of People's Deputies prepared to convene, the city was "a tinderbox," according to one observer. "Anything could happen here."

Outwardly, Strauss seemed more than ready to leave. He clocked time his last days in Moscow with a festive greeting. "Eight more showers!" he told John White, the former Democratic Party chairman, whom he called in Washington frequently to learn what the new President-elect was up to. "Six more showers!" he told an editor and two reporters from *Time* who appeared at the Embassy for a backgrounder. And then, on the night of his dinner, "Three more showers! I can't wait to get the hell out of here."

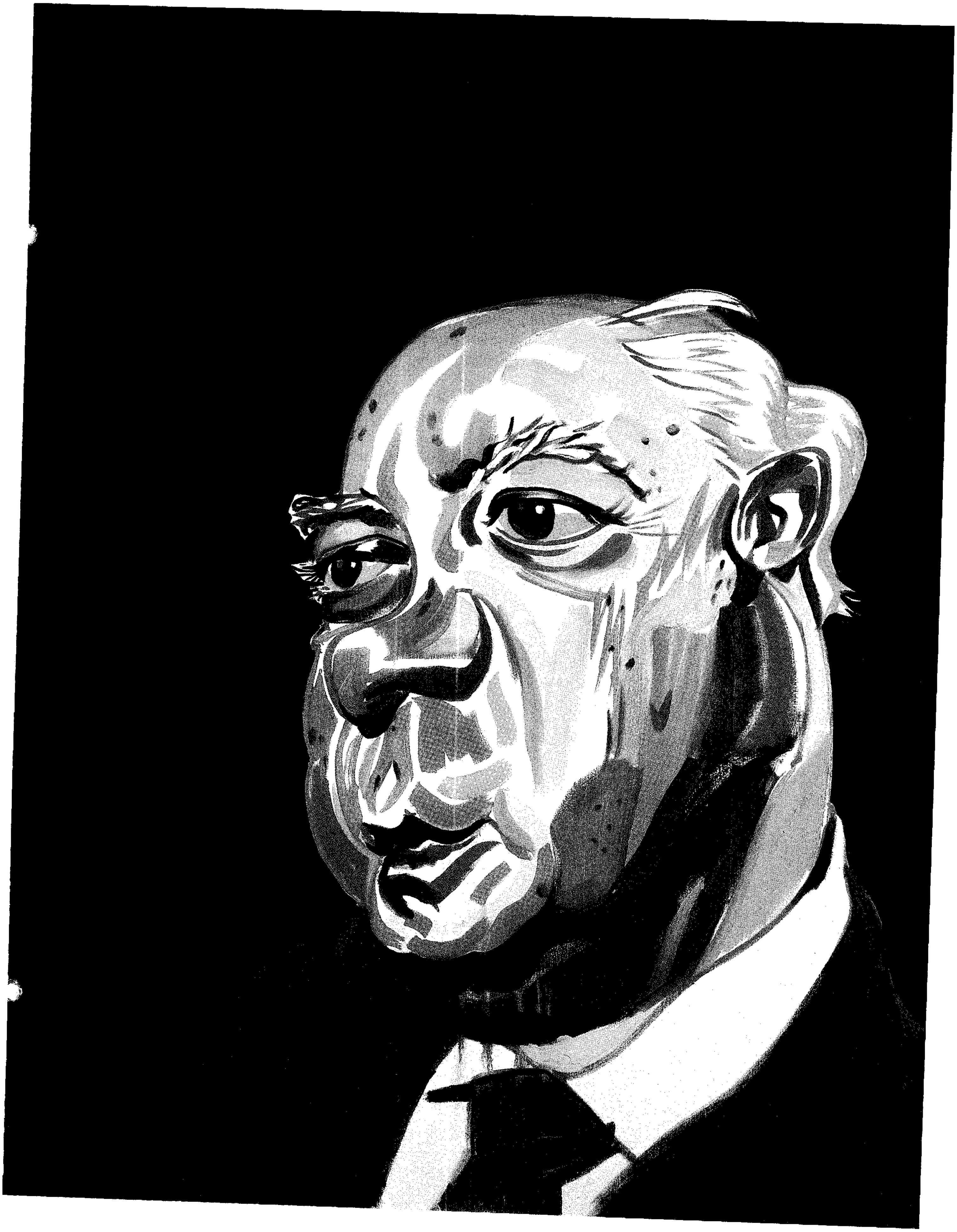
Spaso House, an immense yellow mansion with a graceful white portico and flying putti on the façade, is tucked away on a small square several hundred yards from the Garden Ring Road, which circles central Moscow. The house rises unexpectedly in a hodgepodge commercial neighborhood of cinder-block high rises and nineteenth-century façades, their broken stucco walls scarred with weeping cracks and gray Moscow grime. This area of the city feels frozen in time; the trolleys and the buses, equally dirty, appear to date from the Stalin era. Although Spaso House, which was built for an industrialist in the days of the last czar, still has the largest chandelier in Moscow, the building itself has fallen into disrepair. Strauss complained bitterly about the lack of hot water, the inadequate phone system ("Only two goddam lines!"), the cracked plaster, and the "modern" furniture, which resembles the décor of a Marriott Hotel. "As bad as it looks, it was worse when I got here," he says. "The first thing Bar Bush told me when I got this appointment was to clean up the rathole of Spaso House." His office space at the Embassy was equally shabby. "I said, 'Get that crap out of here and make it livable! Just paint the goddam walls white!' There was so much stuff here. Files! Sawhorses! There had been two fires." The security procedures particularly annoyed him. "In my office, in addition to the two walls and the four-inch glass and the six-foot wall outside the window that protect me, they have installed ironwork with small squares. I could be attacked by a mosquito but not by a large rat."

Strauss greets his dinner guests in his fine Southern drawl—the cultivated "Mr. Democrat" voice familiar from his appearances on decades of Sunday news shows. "Hello, Mr. Minister," he says to Yegor Gaidar, the Acting Prime Minister of Russia. "Mr. President, this is Prime Minister Gaidar," he says, turning to his old friend Jimmy Carter, who happened to be in Moscow for Strauss's final days. "Mr. President, Minister Chubais," he says, introducing Carter to Anatoly Chubais, the leonine and youthful head of Russia's privatization program. As Strauss rolls off the big titles, he grins, as if to let his guests know that he is really intimate enough with these men to call them by their first names. In private conversations in Moscow, he has often referred to his "best friends" in politics, new and old, among them Carter, whom he helped to elect in 1976; Gaidar, whose job as the leader of the reform movement he was attempting to save; and even Boris Yeltsin, whom he coached for his appearance before the United States Congress last June.

"Look at this kid," Strauss says to Carter, referring to Gaidar. "Thirty-six years old, and they've turned over the entire government of Russia to him." Gaidar, an economist who had made his reputation in academia, is plump and socially reticent. The first time he came to dinner at Spaso House, he carried a pistol in his back pocket. His father was a Naval commander and a military correspondent for *Pravda*, his grandfather an author of children's books whose stature was comparable to A. A. Milne's. As a child, Gaidar was teased for being the grandson of "Timur and his Team," his grandfather's best-known work. A reporter once commented that Gaidar resembles Winnie-the-Pooh—perhaps because he looks perpetually startled. Certainly he does not have the ease of a natural politician. Gaidar is understandably tense at Strauss's dinner, since Moscow is rife with rumors that Gaidar will be tossed out because he can't stop the inflation that has made the ruble meaningless.

In Strauss's first months as Ambassador, whenever he gave a dinner at Spaso House the chicken had to be bought at the Moscow branch of a Helsinki department store, so scarce were local supplies. The first time Boris Yeltsin came to dinner, last March, Strauss served him nachos, which he had made himself. ("I am here to practice personal diplomacy," Yeltsin said, somewhat uneasily.) Tonight, the Ambassador and

PHILIP BURKE



his guests dine on duck—a favorite of Carter's—bought at the local market.

Dinner conversation at Spaso House: "All she wanted was a hamburger," Rosalynn Carter recalls. Security at the Embassy compound is so strict that once, several years ago, Amy Carter was denied entry to the Embassy cafeteria. "And no one let Amy in. She just sat on that curb until one of the marines finally recognized her and brought it out to her."

"Isn't that ridiculous?" Strauss says. "The daughter of an American President, and they won't let her have a damn cheeseburger!"

"What is going to happen to this government?" Jimmy Carter asks the Prime Minister.

"There will be changes," Gaidar says carefully. He seems reluctant to admit to a foreigner that there are fissures in the government.

Strauss quickly attempts to take the edge off the conversation. "It's the strangest goddam thing in the world," he says. "In Washington, everybody knows everything that is going on. Out here, the decision-making process is behind closed doors and nobody knows anything. Everybody knows everything, but nobody knows anything. Everything is hidden and confused. I don't think anybody knows anything except Boris Yeltsin. Maybe it's all in one man's head. This town is shut down."

"Well, if Robert Strauss doesn't know anything, I certainly don't," Gaidar says.

The conversation turns to Mikhail Gorbachev. Strauss remarks, "So I said to him, 'I think it is a mistake to visit America before Boris Yeltsin. Let Yeltsin have his moment.' He chose to go anyway." Strauss shakes his head over the ongoing Yeltsin-Gorbachev feud. ("I wouldn't let my dog Brownie get in the middle of that fight," he tells me later.)

"Gorbachev is a person of no importance in Russia now," Gaidar says. "He will not testify at the Communist Party trials. He knows too many secrets. He cannot testify."

"In America, President Reagan was able to videotape his testimony for Iran-Contra," Carter tells Gaidar. "When I was President, I even videotaped my testimony in a trial against a Georgia legislator who had committed a crime in front of me."

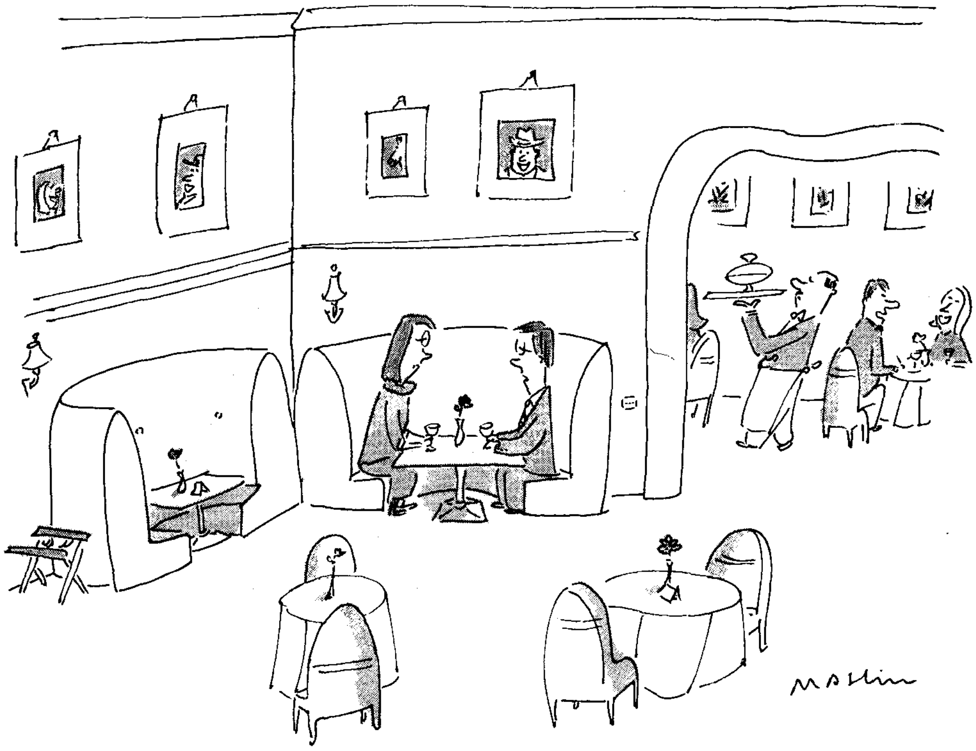
"That will never happen here," Gaidar says.

"Still," Strauss says, "if I were king, which I am not, I would decree that, while I may disagree with and want nothing to do with Gorbachev's politics, I do think he should be treated with the same respect we give to our ex-Presidents."

Suddenly Strauss turns directly to Gaidar. "God damn, Yegor! I thought we in America had done a pretty good job inventing a bureaucracy where very little could get accomplished, but you Russians have beat us cold. You've got a bureaucracy here where nothing can happen. Nothing can get accomplished."

For one of the few times that evening, Gaidar smiles. "Yah, Bob. You are right about that. It is very difficult here. Impossible!"

Later, Strauss will recount the exchange over and over until it becomes part of his ongoing lexicon of sound-bites for the news shows. The anecdote is a perfect "Straussism," as his stories are called by many people in Washington, because it has humor and makes a point and, perhaps more important, places Bob Strauss next to the men of power, where he has lived most of his life.



"There's something you should know about me, Carla—I never had a favorite Beatle."

STRAUSS has silver hair, which he brushes straight back; small, almost dainty features; and an ability to fix his companions with an intense gaze, as if he cannot restrain himself from taking their measure. At seventy-four, he no longer speaks in the broad accent of small-town Texas. Rather, his tone suggests years of boardrooms and late nights and legal negotiations smoothed with political markers and tumblers of vodka, his favorite drink. It is easy to imagine a younger Strauss at an oak kitchen table in the Texas hill country of the nineteen-sixties, speaking conspiratorially and trading favors with his longtime political cronies John Connally and Lyndon Johnson. He has always radiated an ability to mend the fence, quash the indictment, seal the deal. That aura made him one of the highest-paid lawyer-lobbyists in Washington. "Every time I talk to Bob Strauss on the telephone, I know it's going to cost me five hundred dollars just to say hello," a Washington insider said of him recently.

Before coming to Russia, Strauss had made very sure that the Russian leaders understood that he was a man of access and position. He had sought the counsel of Pamela Harriman, Averell Harriman's widow, who was a longtime friend. "Averell told me that the smartest thing he ever did as Ambassador was to say in front of Gromyko, 'Let me call the President about that,' " she told Strauss.

PERSONNEL
Gahan Wilson

"Believe me, Mr. Roberts, checking the wear on a job applicant's molars is just basic company routine."

• •

At dinner, Strauss tells Gaidar, "Everybody here thinks I speak to George Bush daily. While that may be overstating the case, there hasn't been a time I've called him that he hasn't called me back within thirty minutes. I am flattered by that."

Strauss's conversation is punctuated with tall tales and carefully chosen anecdotes that sound filled with intrigue but are usually fairly safe, even banal, except that they produce the effect of emphasizing his associations with powerful people: "I said to the head of the Central Bank, 'All of your ideas sound good, but how are we going to get from A to B?' He had no answers," for instance, or "My phone has been ringing off the hook all weekend. Everyone in Washington thinks the way to get a job with Clinton is through me, because they know I speak to my law partner Vernon Jordan every single day." Strauss's easy flattery and swagger and blunt pronouncements seem theatrical, as if at this point in his life he felt that people expect him to play the part of Robert Strauss. He has been frequently described as a po'boy archetype, but he lacks the crude bluster of a cartoon Texas huckster. His edges are soft, polished. He is, in fact, a member of a rarefied world of German-Jewish settlers who emigrated to Texas in the nineteenth century. He has always said that, despite his family's assimilation, he feels like "an outsider." His pose as an outsider is very Texas.

Over the years, Strauss has developed a famous conversational shtick. He flirts with all women, no matter how seriously they take themselves, and calls most men "you goddam son of a bitch." In the rather humorless atmosphere of the politically correct, Strauss struggles with his tendency toward benign sexual innuendo. "Damn! Why did I tell the girl from NBC, 'Three-fifteen—your place' when she reminded me not to forget our three-fifteen date for a broadcast?" he asked me. "I didn't mean any harm, but I know I embarrassed her." Despite Strauss's sexual bravado, which includes a tendency to propose to almost every woman he meets, he and his wife, Helen, have a legendary marriage, of fifty-one years. "I'd love to run off with you," he teased me, "except I'd have to get home by 7 P.M. to be with Helen." Helen Strauss is a small-boned woman with dark hair, very feminine, even shy, but she rarely forgets a name or a face and has long been her husband's "social encyclopedia." They have three children in their forties, seven grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. His sister-in-law Annette Strauss was the mayor of Dallas until her retirement last winter. ("I'm sure Annette's husband, my brother Ted, voted for Bush," Strauss says. "He would take Hitler on the Supreme Court rather than pay extra tax.")

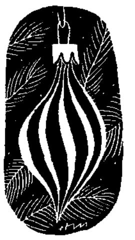
Strauss met Helen when they were students at the University of Texas in Austin. He was a product of the Depression, the ambitious son of a family that owned a drygoods store in the small Texas town of Stamford. Although he was a popular student at the university, his family was struggling all through the Depression. Helen was the daughter of Leslie Jacobs, a shareholder in the Pollock Paper Company, of Dallas, and it was said on campus that her father had the highest salary of anyone in Texas. (He was head of the waxed-paper division.) Helen even spent two years at Wellesley—a highly unusual move in the Texas of the thirties. They married just before Strauss's graduation from law school, in 1941.

Through his long years in Democratic politics, Strauss has always stayed close to men in power. He helped to create John Connally, a college classmate, and Connally returned the favor. "He was a very attractive young man, and he came from South Texas," Strauss once said of Connally. "I was a poor boy from West Texas, and I guess the first thing we had in common was poverty. Not abject poverty. Connally was always sort of chairman of the board, and no one resented him for that. We just assumed he would be."

Strauss, never much of a student, had

the charm of the consummate salesman and was adept enough to be one of two U.T. law students hired by the F.B.I. after graduation. "Everybody in law school wanted to get into the F.B.I. They paid two hundred and sixty-five dollars a month instead of sixty dollars a month. We had tremendous intelligence operations then. I was a 'special agent,' posted all over the country—Des Moines, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dallas. There were dozens of cases where they would call the area where I was staying. They would say, 'Claus Von Strop is coming through from New York. Agent So-and-So will be with him. You take him when he arrives.' "

After the war, Strauss practiced law in Dallas with Dick Gump, another college friend. "The first really big client we had was the Dallas Transit Company, which was privately owned but was being sold to the city. The owner came around to see us, and I said to Gump, 'That guy is going to hire us.' Gump said, 'You're crazy. You're always dreaming. They're going to hire one of the big firms in town. Why would he hire you?' And I said, 'Gump, nobody could capture his imagination the way I did. I could look in his eye and tell that he understood every word I was saying.' The next day, I got a call asking me to come to New York to discuss the fee with the fellow's lawyer. I said, 'Will he pay our expenses?' We were broke. I took Helen with me and we went to '21' for lunch. I said, 'Helen, if we take on this case, I'm going to have to take on the whole city of Dallas, and for a young lawyer that's not good! I'm not going to represent him unless I can make fifty thousand out of it.' When we got to '21,' I ordered a gin Martini to settle my nerves. Then this guy comes in and says, 'Bring us another one.' Then I had a third. He said to me, 'We are prepared to offer you fifty thousand.' I said, 'If you think I am going to take on the city of Dallas for fifty thousand, you better get yourself another boy.' I hear myself saying, 'I want a hundred-thousand-dollar retainer. And if we get over five million, then I want twenty per cent.' That night, we went to more bars, and I was really hung over the next morning. The man called me and said, 'You have a deal.' He sent me a check for a hundred thousand. Two years later, we were out of the case and I had earned another three hundred and fifty thousand. That was the beginning."



In the nineteen-fifties in Dallas, Strauss was determined to win a place on the City Council. By 1961, he had been rejected twice for the ticket by the Dallas establishment. "Connally was then the Secretary of the Navy. I said, 'Price Daniel is not going to get re-elected governor. You ought to run.' So a bunch of us met at Dolph Briscoe's ranch. He later became governor, too. We were all trying to get a handle somewhere to get ahead. When Connally got elected, I said, 'I don't want a damn thing from you except when you make appointments in Dallas County to say, 'Let's talk to Bob Strauss.' " Strauss was rewarded, however, with the plum political appointment of chairman of the Texas State Banking Commission, which regulates all the state bank charters. By 1963, Strauss was so powerful that he was Connally's liaison with the White House for President Kennedy's visit to Dallas on November 22nd.

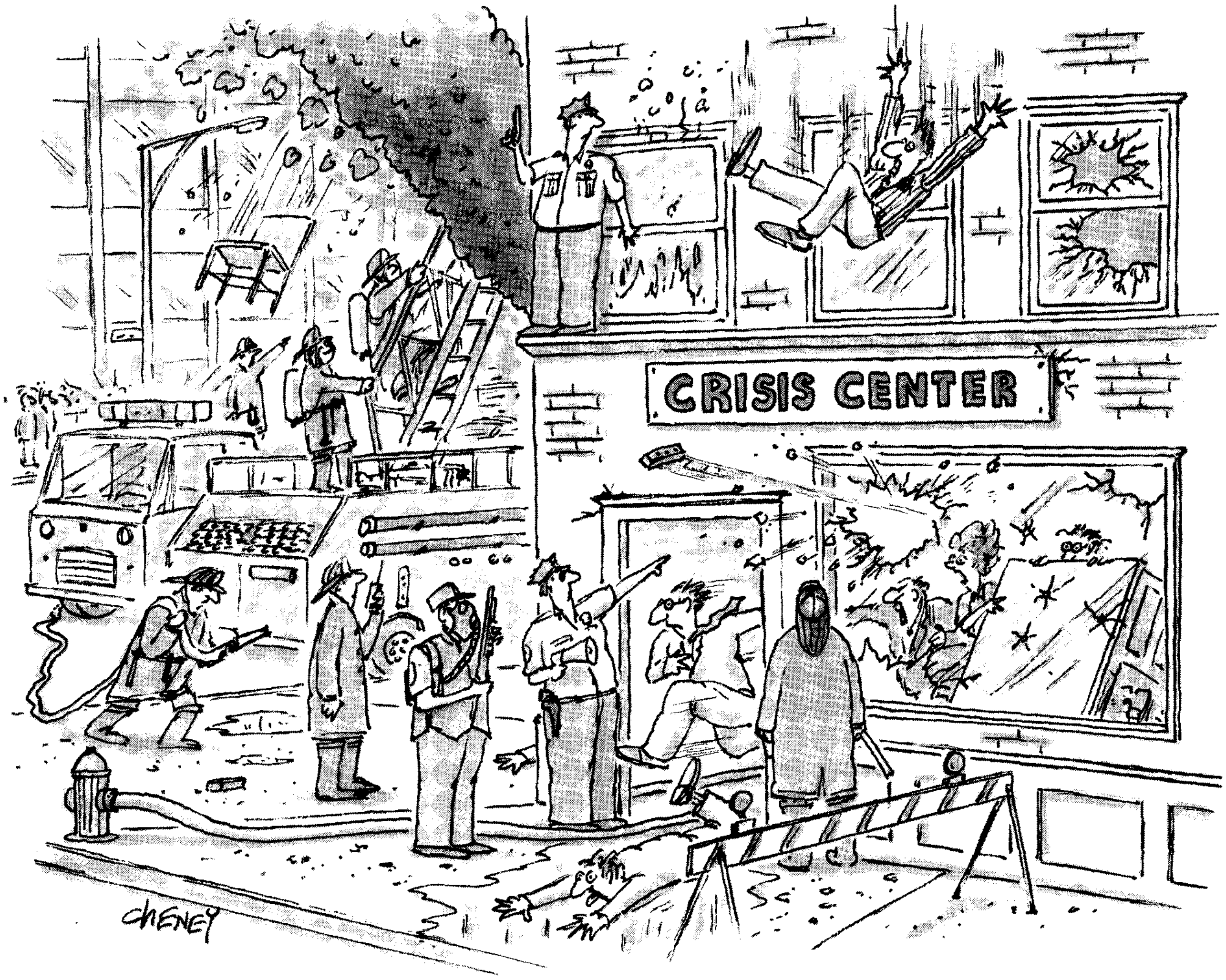
"Lyndon Johnson just towered over me and intimidated me terribly," Strauss says. "He's the one person who had my number all his life. Even when he was a sick old man, out of office, whenever he called, perspiration broke out on the top of my head. He was the best I ever saw. Tragic, but the best I ever saw. I remember once asking him, 'Why did you cast that vote, Mr. President?' 'Bob,' he said, 'one thing you'll learn someday is that you have to be a demagogue on a lot of little things if you want to be around to have your way on the big things.' I'll never forget him saying that. A lesson in primer politics from the Master."

Strauss built his political bona fides as a Democratic fund-raiser and a Party chairman in the nineteen-seventies. A grateful Jimmy Carter appointed him to be a Special Trade Representative, a negotiator for the Middle East, and a member of a Presidential committee on inflation. But Strauss's true power has always rested on his reputation as a fixer, a middleman, the man to see.

Strauss loves to dish people to their faces or behind their backs, camouflaging his true intentions with a twinkle that gentles his words. When, as chairman of the 1980 election campaign, he was raising millions of dollars for Jimmy Carter, he would say to C.E.O.s, "I told Jimmy Carter, 'I am going to keep your skinny ass in the White House.' " A former Carter speechwriter recalls that Strauss once told him, "I am just trying to protect the President from Commie advisers like you." In Moscow, at a farewell reception in his honor, Strauss fingered the lapel of a stuffy British diplomat. "Ah can see why you never get a good goddam thing done here. You're always spending too much time at that fancy tailor of yours."

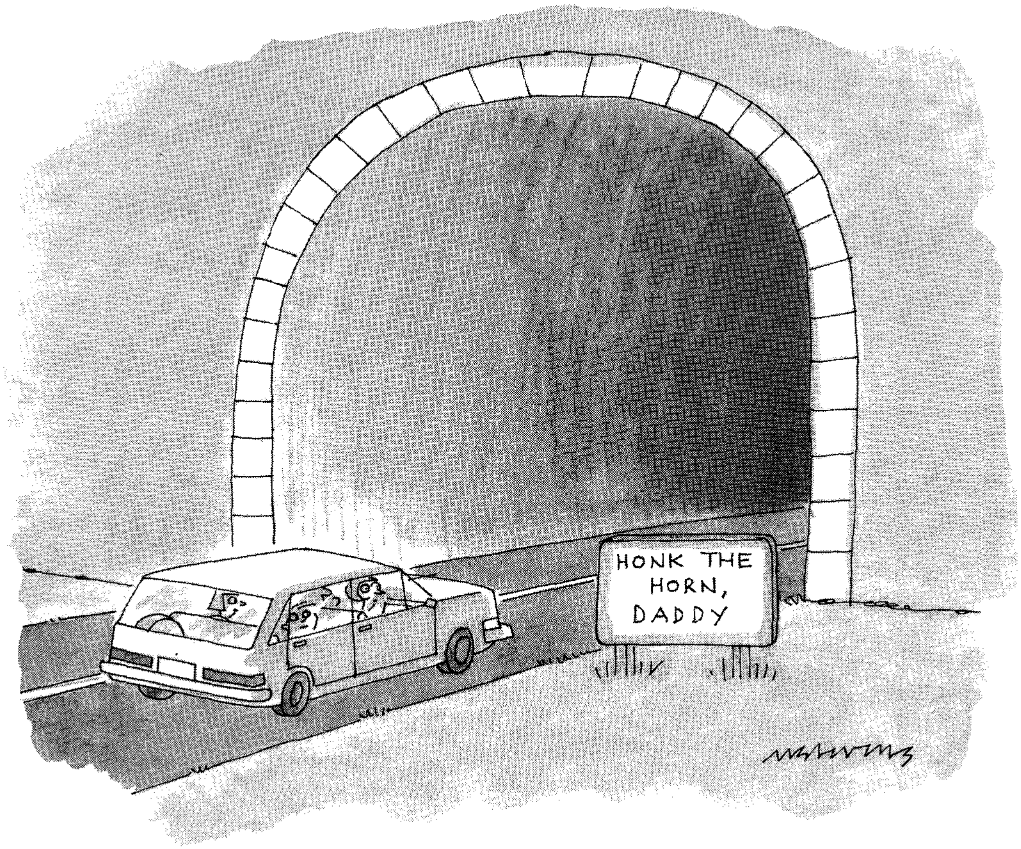
Reporters often ask Strauss to explain his theories of power. A popular question is "How many people do you have on your Rolodex?" Jim Wright, the former Speaker of the House, once said of him, "I don't know who the next President will be, but I sure do know who his best friend will be." A frequent Strauss construction is "I said to someone" or "I told Boris Yeltsin," as if Strauss felt the need to defend his opinions with proof of his own status. He often says to reporters, "Now, this is a confidence," or "I'm going to tell you a story, but I don't know if you have the discipline not to use it." Several times in Moscow when Strauss imparted a "confidence" in my presence, the stories had to do with an accolade he had received—in one instance, a compliment the German Ambassador had paid him at lunch. Strauss's special talent is said by many to be an American version of Kremlinology—understanding who gets along with whom, the meaning behind meanings, the nuances of events. During the 1988 Presidential campaign, members of Michael Dukakis's campaign staff were careful to call Strauss by noon—"just so he could go to lunch at Duke Zeibert's and say he had talked to us," one of them told me. But perhaps it was more a matter of their being afraid not to call him, because they did not want to incur his wrath.

Like Clark Clifford, Strauss has been sensitive to the charge that he is little more than an ersatz elder statesman, a smoothie selling his connections for fees. As U.S. Trade Representative, Strauss had met and become friendly with Keiya Toyonaga, a senior executive of the Japanese electronics conglomerate Matsushita. Subsequently, when Matsushita bought MCA, in 1990, Strauss actually represented both sides during the negotiations—serving, as he put it, as "counsel to the transaction—an honest broker."



MCA paid his firm eight million dollars; the amount he received from Matsushita has never been disclosed. Strauss has been criticized as being "99 per cent hot air"—so Michael Kinsley once wrote of him in *The New Republic*—or an empty suit who "dines out" on his insider status. One night at dinner, Strauss suddenly began to talk about Kinsley's piece. "How could he write that I was a fraud?" he asked me. "He said my life stood for nothing. I worked to get Carter elected President. I worked for peace in the Middle East. I've been married for fifty years and I have all these children and grandchildren. Doesn't that stand for anything? How could anyone say that I am a fraud?"

FOR years, there was a fundamental contradiction in the job of United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union. The ideal candidate was one who would have the kind of warm relationship that Llewellyn Thompson once had with Khrushchev, while operating with the clear understanding that he was dealing with a country with whom at any time his own country might be engaged in a nuclear war. Traditionally, the post of United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union was the preserve of the Foreign Service. Strauss's predecessor, Jack Matlock, appointed by Ronald Reagan, was a classic Kremlinologist, the "diplomats' diplomat": he spoke a perfect, exquisite Russian and filled Spaso House with ballet dancers and dissidents. In his spare time, he took Russian lessons from a grande dame who had spent most of the Second World War hidden in caves. Matlock, like Chip Bohlen before him, had the quality of *Fingerspitzengefühl*, a German word meaning "the feeling in your fingertips." Chip Bohlen could decode the Russian press almost as well as any Russian, and Matlock, although he lacked Bohlen's intuitive genius, had a strong sense while Gorbachev was still in power that Yeltsin would take over. "By the summer of 1990, Matlock was becoming quite a Yeltsinite," according to the historian Michael Beschloss, who, along with Strobe Talbott, is the author of a forthcoming book entitled "At the Highest Levels: The Inside Story of the End of the Cold War." "Matlock was urging the Bush Administration to wind down with Gorbachev and to make more of an approach to Yeltsin," Beschloss says. This advice was largely rejected by George Bush and his State Department, in part because of their desire to push through an arms agreement in "the window of opportunity before Gorbachev was ousted," as one official told me. Matlock and James Baker reportedly did not have a good relationship. "This was demonstrated by the fact that when Matlock came back, in March of 1989, Bush gave him twenty minutes of his time," Beschloss says. "This word quickly went around the Foreign Service and with the Russians. Bush didn't like him. By June of 1991, Gorbachev was very



nervous that the American Embassy, from Matlock on down, had become a nest of Yeltsinites. Gorbachev felt that he had no one to communicate with to get to Bush. He felt that any message passed through Matlock might be distorted by the filter of Matlock's favoritism of Yeltsin."

When Strauss became Ambassador-designate, in the early summer of 1991, the appointment was perceived in the Foreign Service community as a signal that Bush was going to emphasize his relationship with Gorbachev, rather than attempt an alliance with Yeltsin. It was thought that Strauss could be the perfect hand-holder for Gorbachev. He could promote American private investment, and explain to Gorbachev why continued economic reform was in his interest and why the West could not pay the bills. Most important, for the first time in Moscow there was an Ambassador who could bypass the Assistant Secretaries of State and speak directly to Baker or Bush. The great irony of Strauss's appointment, of course, is that Matlock was vindicated and at the very start of his job the man who replaced him was required to detach himself completely from Gorbachev and realign with Yeltsin.

In preparing for his post, Strauss had a meeting with George Shultz at "21"; had breakfast with Frank Wizner, a former Ambassador to Egypt; and talked to former Ambassadors to the Soviet Union Arthur Hartman and Tom Watson. He attempted to make a date with the retiring Matlock, who was said to be surprised that Bush had appointed a man with no sense of Russia to such a delicate post. Word quickly went around Washington that Matlock had dissed the new Ambassador by saying he was far too busy planning a trip to schedule any time with him, although Matlock did have two lengthy phone conversations with Strauss while he was still in Moscow.

Strauss was to assume his duties in Moscow in October, but on August 18th, while he and Helen were vacationing at a house of theirs in Del Mar, California, he received a late-night call from Brent Scowcroft, the national-security adviser. " 'The President is sending the plane. There has been a coup. Come through Washington and we will swear you in,' " Strauss remembers being told. "I'd been appointed and confirmed, but I hadn't taken the oath. I had to get my instructions. It was just a whirlwind. Scowcroft and Bush and Baker had to tell me what was going on."

Arriving in Moscow on the twenty-first of August, Strauss was met at Sheremetyevo I Airport by his deputy at the Embassy, Jim Collins. Miles of Army tanks blocked the highway. Rumors were all over the city that Gorbachev was about to be executed. There was said to be an extreme likelihood that the coup leaders would at any moment gas the thousands of protesters massed at the headquarters of the Russian parliament. Strauss worried that he might be the American Ambassador who would have to preside over the dismantling of Russia's first, primitive attempts to install a form of democracy. He had a sense that history was about to roll over everybody and that there was not much he would be able to do about it.

Collins, a fifty-three-year-old career diplomat with a cherubic face, had a long, distinguished record in Soviet and Russian affairs. He and Strauss discussed the fact that the Ambassador would not be presenting his credentials for the time being, because the United States would not recognize the coup plotters' legitimacy and Gorbachev was not available. Collins believed that it was far too risky for Strauss to move into Spaso House, so for his first four days in Moscow the Ambassador-designate stayed in an extra bedroom on the ground floor of Collins's house in the Embassy compound, three-quarters of a mile from Spaso House. "The only way we could get into the Embassy was through the barricades," Collins recalls. "Every street had been blocked with building materials and vehicles. We had to drive up on a sidewalk. So that was how he arrived. We saw all the tanks coming down the highway. We arrived to hear that a plane was being sent down for Gorbachev by the Russian government."

Strauss says, "The first thing I said—I don't think I had even taken off my coat—was 'Would you please see if you could find Anatoly Dobrynin?' I figured it would take two days. The next thing I know, someone is saying, 'Ambassador Dobrynin is on the phone.' I never completed another phone call that fast the whole time I was in Moscow! I said to him, 'Anatoly, Bob Strauss.' He said, 'I didn't expect you so soon.' And I said, 'I didn't expect to be here.' I said, 'Can we talk on this phone?' And he said, 'We have been friends long enough. We can communicate on this phone. We can't talk.' He meant we were old friends, and could understand each other without being explicit. I said, 'I've been successful all my life by knowing the right people to ask for good advice. You are my first call.' He said, 'Keep a low profile. Keep your mouth shut. This thing going on may not turn out to be a success.' It was good advice. Two days later, the putsch was over."

A few days after the coup failed, Strauss attended the vast public funeral for the three soldiers who were victims of the violence. Four hundred thousand people were massed in Manezh Square. Gorbachev had been released by the coup plotters, but to Strauss he appeared to be shaken, a distant and tentative figure on a flatbed truck in front of the mob. Strauss made the decision to push his way through. Just before he dived into the throng, he spotted Fernando Salleo, the Italian Ambassador, whom he recognized from his days in Washington. "I said to this fellow, 'Let's go over to the truck where the microphone is.' He said, 'I am going to go with Bob Strauss.' And he ended up on the cover of *Time*. I said to my deputy, Vera Murray, 'What the hell, Vera, it's like the goddam Democratic Convention—everybody is in charge, nobody is in charge.' Next thing I know, I'm helping a rabbi up onto the truck and helping a priest down. And Gorbachev is helping me up on that truck. My poor interpreter almost had a stroke. He was trembling. I said, 'Come on. We're going to get up there and speak.' I had a little something prepared. I said, 'A great American said, "Give me liberty or give me death."' I had written that down. I said, 'These young men did not die in vain. Just as liberty flourished in America, so it will flourish here, too.' They must have played it a thousand times on CNN. Of course, Bush loved it. Hell, I had only been in the country for three days. All I remember thinking was 'This is the God-damnedest mob. Like Times Square when we used to close the Democratic Presidential campaigns out in the garment district, only four times as big. I remember thinking, We've had a hundred thousand in the garment district—how many can this be? It's funny how you relate everything to your own political experience."

STRAUSS did not settle into Moscow easily. It quickly became known in the city's foreign community that he was unhappy in the post. His cable traffic became legendary: "Who wrote this dumb policy, a goddam committee?" "If such-and-such isn't put into place within three days, Collins and I are going to refuse country clearance to all tourists coming to Russia." He reportedly threatened to move into the refurbished Hotel Metropol, with its twenty-four-hour room service, sixty-dollar orders of blini and caviar, and direct dialling to the United States. Strauss frequently mentioned the disaster of dealing with the Russians "on a macro level." He negotiated for months with the mayor of Moscow, Gavriil Popov, for a new building in the old Embassy compound. "We needed that damn building to put our A.I.D. people in," Strauss told me. "They kept promising and promising. I went over to see the Mayor, and I said, 'Mr. Mayor, we still don't have our building, and our people are coming into town day after tomorrow to handle the distribution of the food.' He said, 'Yes, I know. We're working on it. We're waiting for the committee to act on it.' I said, 'Mr. Mayor, there is no point in going to the committee. I am going to leave here in five minutes, and if I don't have it I'm going to go out there and call a press conference and denounce you and stop the food from coming in.' He said 'What?' and I said 'Just what I said.' We talked a few more minutes, and I said, 'Five minutes are up, Mr. Mayor,' and he said, 'Take the building.' I came over and told my people at the Embassy, 'Put a chain-link fence around the goddam building.' That's the way things work here. I kind of like Popov, the old son of a bitch. I think he would steal anything that wasn't nailed down. He would steal a rake if he lived in a high rise."

Strauss often speaks of his fifteen-month posting in terms of personalities

EXIT
← TO 42nd ST.
UPTOWN ←
DOWNTOWN →
PAY FARE
PAY FARE
PAY FARE
PAY FARE

instead of events, but his political cunning earned him allies in a struggling government, which was "a miracle wrapped in danger inside a dilemma," Strobe Talbott recently wrote, echoing Churchill. What could any Ambassador have done in this mess? "At a time when the American body politic was getting bored with Russia, Strauss kept it on the agenda," Condoleeza Rice, a former national-security official, told me. "Strauss wrote op-ed pieces, he went on talk shows, he was constantly on the telephone to the Russian Desk at State." He made a firm and positive ally of Boris Yeltsin. Strauss calls himself "a people person," and frequently says of Yeltsin, "He has captured my imagination." He sometimes adds, "And I believe I have captured his imagination." The man of Siberia and the fixer from Texas formed a strong friendship; Strauss even took his great-grandchild to Yeltsin's dacha for a visit. Yeltsin appeared to see in Strauss his own tendencies toward direct action and surface blarney.

Before Yeltsin became President, he planned a trip to the United States and expressed a desire to visit NASA headquarters in Houston. Government officials denied him clearance, saying that he was a "security risk." Strauss recalls, "Somebody called me and said, 'This is the damnedest thing in the world. Boris Yeltsin can't go to NASA.' And they let every goddam schoolchild in America in that place. So I called Brent Scowcroft and I said, 'This is just absurd! Boris Yeltsin is not a security risk! What are you people thinking of?' And he said, 'You're right, Bob. We'll take care of it.' Yeltsin never forgot that."

Last June, as Yeltsin prepared to leave for a summit meeting in Washington to lobby for a twenty-four-billion-dollar A.I.D. package, he asked Strauss to explain congressional procedure to him. "What about the question-and-answer period?" Yeltsin asked.

"Congress doesn't ask questions," Strauss said. He insisted that Yeltsin watch videos of Vaclav Havel's speeches, and from the tapes Yeltsin learned what to expect and where in the Capitol every step and camera would be.

In addition, Strauss had to push a reluctant Yegor Gaidar to fly to Washington with Yeltsin. "When we were getting ready for the summit, I said to Gaidar, 'I want you to meet with this group and that group.' He said, 'I'm not going.' I said, 'What do you mean, you're not going?' He said, 'I have too much to do. You told me that when one travels with the President there is nothing for one to do except stand around and wait for the President to finish his meeting with the other President. I can't get my work done. I sleep on a cot half the time at the office.' I said, 'That's the dumbest thing in the world. Let me tell you something, Yegor. If you are not on that plane, then the Russian press and the Western press will say that you have lost your power, because you were not taken on that trip.' I said, 'I don't give a good God damn what you do or if you don't do anything. It's worth three or four days of your time, because when that trip is over if you're not on it you will be a has-been.' He said, 'I never thought of that.' He's a thirty-six-year-old academic—you can't expect him to know these things. *I* am supposed to think of these things."

It became Strauss's mandate to be the cheerleader, and even a bit of the demagogue, in a defeated country struggling with the loss of empire and with a confusing array of new laws, where Moroccan and German scam artists worked the bar at the Metropol hustling timber and oil deals and research scientists had to grow potatoes in their tiny gardens to survive a monthly inflation rate of thirty per cent. The key issue has been what the West should be doing to promote political and economic reform. Graham Allison, the head of the Harvard S.D.I. Project (the initials stand for Strengthening Democratic Institutions), told me, "Apart from a couple of excellent speeches and an erratic diplomacy from Baker and Bush, Strauss has been out there all alone fighting and thinking, Where are the troops?" The troops, according to Allison, deserted Strauss because the Administration was still "stuck in a Cold War mind-set, overwhelmed by the revolution in the former Soviet Union, exhausted by Desert Storm," and, according to Strauss himself, not willing "to see money go down a rathole." Strauss lobbied tirelessly for the new Russia, to try to impress upon the West the importance of shoring up the faltering Yeltsin government, arguing that democracy could not survive without mammoth private Western investment. "What I have done is to try to communicate with the Russian leaders what the United States can and cannot do," he says. "And I have tried to communicate with the United States what the Russians can and cannot do."

Before his arrival, Strauss had feared that his long years in Democratic politics, and his long associations with powerful men, would do him little good in Russia, and being forced to leave for his new post so suddenly had unnerved him. He had barely begun his Russian lessons, and had little real sense of the grand pageant of Soviet history or culture. He was apprehensive about occupying the same rooms at Spaso House where Averell Harriman had once fretted while Molotov deliberated over the Japanese peace and the great American Ambassador Llewelyn Thompson had dined with Khrushchev at the height of the Cold War. Strauss arrived in a society where the new entrepreneurs were setting up stands on the streets and trying to make a living selling six bottles of a Windex-colored liqueur from the Caribbean or a single boot and a pair of matched shoes. He was astonished by the level of deprivation among the professional classes. At a Passover Seder that Strauss gave at Spaso House, he turned to a handsome Russian woman at the table and said, "I imagine that you will have much better matzo balls than this at your Seder." "No, Mr. Ambassador," she said. "To make matzo balls you need chicken fat, and this year we can't afford to buy a chicken." Meanwhile, at the Metropol, where the London *Financial Times* played host to a recent seminar entitled "Doing Business with Russia," the local businessmen lined up for the morning buffet, with its chafing dishes of American-style scrambled eggs and footed porcelain service bowls of cornflakes—a delicacy in Moscow—splashily illuminated by a centerpiece of chopped ice and flickering lava lamps.

"Don't diminish your currency," Dobrynin advised Strauss shortly after his arrival in Moscow. "Don't talk to anybody but the President and the most powerful people. You are the American Ambassador. You are the second-most-important person in Russia." Strauss avoided filling the vast rooms of Spaso

"Hello. I'm a first-time caller."

House with every visiting scientist and M. & A. tycoon, and the result, for all his access to Yeltsin and Gaidar, was that he felt painfully isolated. Many nights, he retreated with Helen to their upstairs bedroom and worked the phones to Washington or Texas, where it was eight or nine hours earlier, and his law partner Vernon Jordan filled him in on what was happening at home. "If the phone rang on Saturday or Sunday morning at 7:30 A.M., I would say, 'Ambassador, how are you? What is the word from Moscow?' " Jordan told me. "It was Strauss. He was not calling to complain. He was calling because he was lonely for conversation. He needed to connect."

"These last few days, I guess I am feeling a little better, but a week ago I just felt as if I had bottomed out," Strauss told me shortly before he left for Washington. "I hit my lowest ebb. The pressure on Yeltsin to veer away from the reform process was on, and the American pundits were commenting on the fact that this was not a country that lent itself to democratic values." Strauss had just given his final press conference for the American reporters in Moscow. His houseman served the press corps miniature pizzas and drinks. "When I have guests, I like them to feel at home," he told me. The reporters hovered around Strauss, treating him more like an affectionate relative than a newsmaker. For an hour, he had given them quote after quote of puffery calculated to move on the wires for the weekend editions of the American papers. Now, with the tape recorders off and the notebooks closed, Strauss had stopped selling.

"Nothing has changed here, not one damn thing," Strauss said after the reporters had left. He was having his first vodka of the evening, in a small reception room. He rested his glass on the arm of a beige brocade sofa and looked toward the ceiling. His wife and Vera Murray, a slim woman with short reddish hair who has been his amanuensis for twenty-three years, began to nod in agreement. "Nothing has changed," he repeated dramatically, pointing to the ceiling and staring intently at me, as if to imply that "they" were listening. "We have to be careful of every damn word we say. They are better at it than ever, and so are we."

When I was with Strauss in Moscow, he was asked several times whether he had spoken with the President-elect, the first Democratic President since Truman that Strauss had done nothing to help elect. Strauss had had to sit out the election, because he had been appointed by a Republican. On Election Night, he set his alarm clock for 4 A.M., so he and Helen could watch CNN International headlines on the TV in their bedroom to learn who had won, while across the world it was 7 P.M. and his closest friends had gathered in Little Rock. When Strauss got the appointment to Moscow, it was said in Washington that Bush and Baker wanted him to sit out the election to make sure he could be of no help to the Democrats. It was also said that Strauss felt that the Democrats were so fragmented that they could never win in 1992, so he grabbed the chance to go to Moscow. He had the most important post in the Foreign Service, but it is not hard to visualize him at Spaso House stewing that he was out of the picture, doing his bit for Bush. "Bob lived for the daily faxes from John White with the polls and the news from Washington," Vera Murray says. Strauss, a telephone nut, inhaler of newspapers, was virtually cut off. The mail arrived from Helsinki only once a week. There were no regular newspaper deliveries, and *USA Today* arrived two days late. "When Bob discovered he could plug into the Washington *Post's* data bank, it just made his day," Murray says. Strauss often found himself in the position of having to get his information about the campaign from the American reporters who were in touch with their colleagues in New York and Washington.

"Do you have a meeting scheduled with Clinton?" I asked him.

I was surprised by his response, which was vociferous. "I have nothing scheduled. Believe me, the one thing he doesn't need is people trying to schedule things for him. I've been through that, and I know that the greatest favor you can do is to leave him alone. I've never even congratulated the man. I know it's a chore for him to have to take a call from me—and he damn near has to take it. It's just a pain in the rear end to him. And he doesn't have the time, he doesn't have the desire, his mind is on other things. I presume he has strength enough not to feel offended or think that Strauss ignored him all through the election. I haven't talked to Bill Clinton since he started running for President." Then Strauss said, "I did speak to Mickey Kantor"—the campaign chairman—"every Sunday."

In State Department language, this is "pack-out day." As Strauss works at his office in the Embassy compound, the movers are filling the final boxes at Spaso House. All morning long, Strauss's appointments are punctuated by phone calls from the residence: "Helen wants to know if you packed the green jacket" and "Has there been any progress in getting Carter in to see Yeltsin?" As Strauss makes his goodbye rounds, he is presented with gifts; Boris Yeltsin gives him a small agate-and-amethyst mosaic depicting Russian white birch trees. "It is just so sad, so very very sad," Yeltsin recently said to Strauss about his need to go home. John Stephens, a twenty-four-year-old Russian scholar from Seattle, who lucked into a job as Strauss's driver, hands him a package, saying, "The other drivers and I thought you might like the American flag that was on your car."

"John, never give anyone else credit for a good idea. It's a sign of tremendous immaturity."

Before lunch, Stephens drives Strauss and me to a reception at the Czech Embassy. "You'll have to ride on the left side of the car," Strauss tells me. "It's more of this damn protocol." The car, a black Cadillac, has a special locking system on the rear doors, and a flag, which, Stephens says, must be displayed "whenever the Ambassador is in the car." As we drive out of the compound, the streets are filled with babushkas wearing shiny vinyl coats, and streetcars giving off sparks; it's like the final scene in "Dr. Zhivago." The Czech Embassy is surprisingly grand, with vast halls and murals of stained glass. We move toward a large marble staircase. "Most of these people are dull as dishwater, but this is part of saying goodbye," Strauss says. The rear wall of the stairway is a double-height mural of Slavic dancers in native costumes, with smiling faces and billowing lace dresses. As we reach the top of the stairs, a large shaggy man comes toward Strauss, quivering with purpose. "Mr. Ambassador. I am Ambassador from Poland. Poland and Russia, very important meeting today. Very important negotiations. I am sorry, Mr. Ambassador, I cannot stay at the reception. Ten minutes! Ten minutes! Very important negotiations!"

"Well," Strauss says, pointing to his watch, "go to your meeting."

"Mr. Ambassador! You are a man of great achievement! Poland sends its compliments."

On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, five or six thousand demonstrators appear in Red Square to protest the Yeltsin government. "It's a pathetic turnout," Strauss says. "Just the usual collection of sad sacks, anti-democrats, and anti-Semites." On another day, I accompany him on another set of goodbye rounds. To each group that he meets with he lets drop the fact that Jimmy Carter is staying with him at Spaso House. At breakfast, he meets the head of ITT, Rand Araskog, and then he meets a group of New York businessmen, and says, "This is nostalgia time for me," and calls the economy of Russia "a shambles." He then drives to the President Hotel and delivers a short speech on the need for Russia to pass legislation to protect intellectual-property rights. Later, he does a live feed for "Good Morning America" from a tiny hovel of a studio above the Moscow Pizza Hut. I am surprised by Strauss's mood. For the first time in the few days I have been with him, he seems muted, unsure of exactly what he has accomplished in Moscow. In the car, he talks about Georgi Arbatov, the head of the U.S.A.-Canada Institute. A visit with Arbatov, "for the expert view," has for years been a required stop for all visiting Western journalists and businessmen who can't get better access; Arbatov, like Strauss, had become a man to see, a local oracle who attempts to explain the inexplicable mysteries of the new Russia—despite the fact that he made his reputation originally as a Brezhnev confidante. Indeed, the New York businessmen had seen him the day before. "God damn, that Arbatov is always so damn negative," Strauss says in the car. "I told him he was too negative. He's an outsider who's been shut out of this government, so he feels like everything is going to collapse here. But I am worried. He's always six months ahead. He dropped Gorbachev six months before everybody else did. He picked up Yeltsin six months before anyone else did." Strauss adds, "Gaidar said to me on many occasions, 'My term is extremely limited: you can't do the things I want to do and remain in office.'"

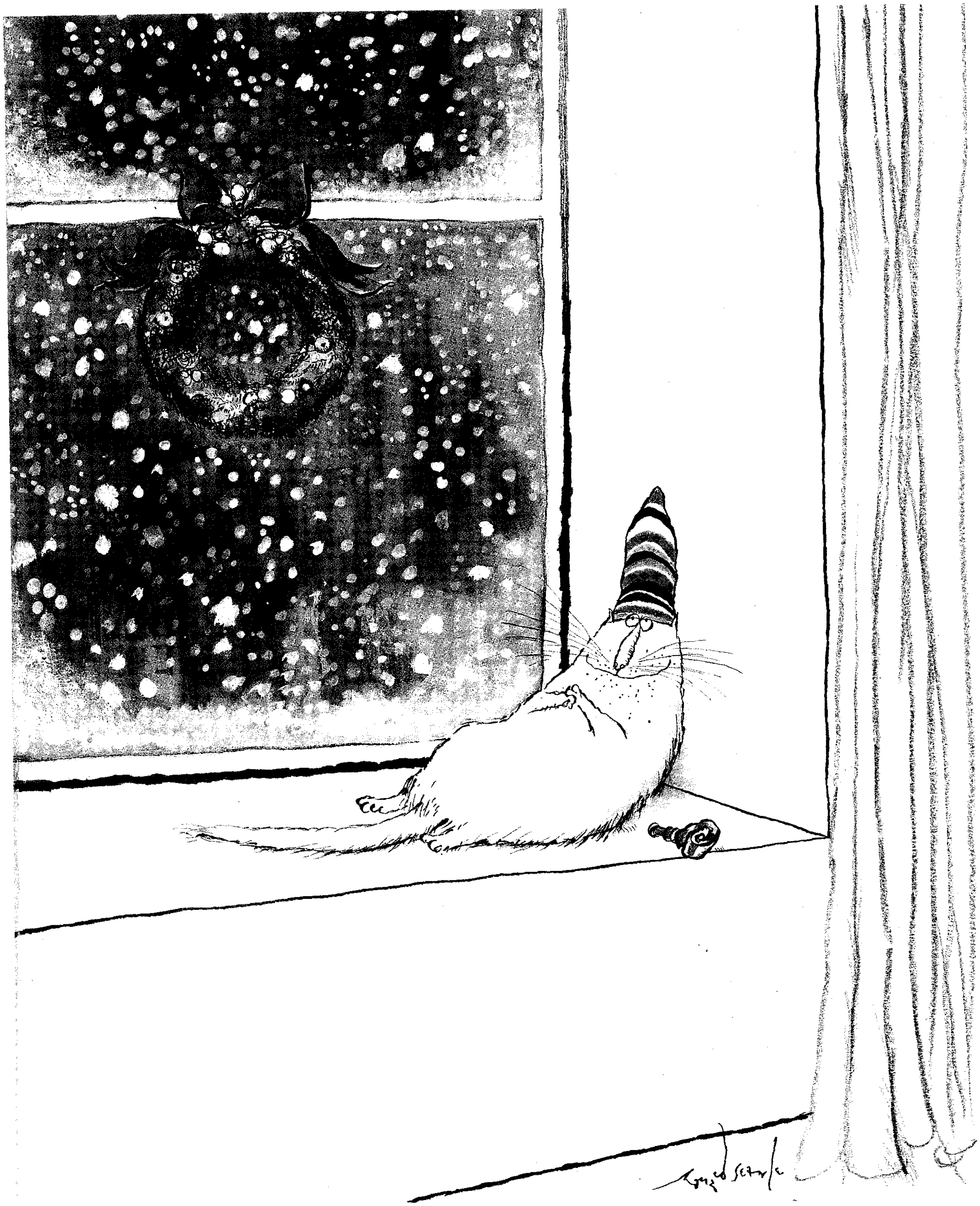
On the way back to Spaso House, Strauss begins to talk about the man he feels he is too often compared to, Clark Clifford. "It used to be, ten years ago, when people said to me, 'Bob Strauss, you're the next Clark Clifford,' I would take it as the greatest compliment in the world. Now, as much as I consider Clark a man of great accomplishment, I worry about the temptations that come with age and the need to remain influential. While Clark has been a close friend of mine for years, I don't know how to explain the dilemma he got himself in. I don't want to be eighty years old and feeling as if I don't have a base. Being vulnerable to someone like Abedi"—Agha Hasan Abedi, the founder of B.C.C.I. "I don't want anyone to say, 'Strauss was Ambassador and now he is selling introductions to Gaidar for two hundred and fifty thousand dollars.'" The exact figure rolls off Strauss's tongue without a pause. (A few weeks from now, the figure will plummet when Gaidar is tossed out of office.) "They tell me at my law firm that they are going to open a Moscow office. I said, 'Don't think *I* can do anything to help you.'"

It starts to drizzle as we head up the driveway. "We'll just sit another ten minutes or so, John," he says to his driver. I watch Stephens as he walks around the car and removes the Ambassador's flag from the aerial. Strauss and I look out at the rain. "What am I going to do?" he asks. "I have lots of energy. Life turns me on! Women turn me on! Helen turns me on! What am I going to do with all this energy? I worry about being tempted in the same way my old friend Clark Clifford became tempted. And I am not saying that I believe Clark did it for the money, although he was always greedy as hell. He was searching for a new power base, and I don't want that to happen to me." There is a silence in the car. "God damn," he says. "I better go see if the President is here." ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE

PARTY ANIMAL

by Ronald Searle



THE SHADOWS OF WILLIAM TREVOR

by Stephen Schiff

IN its sixty-fifth year, the face of William Trevor has become a sierra, like the faces of W. H. Auden and Lillian Hellman before him—a tectonic record of the toll that imagining takes on the imaginer. Trevor is probably the greatest living writer of short stories in the English language (his only competition would be the equally gnarled—and ninety-two-year-old—V. S. Pritchett). And now it's as though the hundreds of landscapes he has invented had run out of room. They've erupted from the confines of his mind into his physiognomy: the crisscrossed deltas under his eyes; the gullies some invisible river has carved down his cheeks; the creased forehead that checkerboards when he's perplexed, like farmlands seen from the air. Trevor is a mild man, retiring and soft-spoken, famously shy and benign. His voice, a soothing baritone with a wisp of fog in it, flips upward at the ends of phrases in a way that hints at his Irish origins, and his conversation is self-effacing to a fault. Almost nothing about him suggests that he could possibly know anything of the throttled romances and blistering humiliations and free-falls into madness that wrack his characters' lives.

Crazy artists, or flamboyant ones, can be strangely comforting. We feel we understand where their visions come from; we're lulled by the symmetry of turbulent art and turbulent lives. But what about those other, more enigmatic figures, the placid and the sane, the middle-class, burgherlike souls who betray no evidence of the visionary within until they apply paint to canvas—or pen to paper, like Trevor? "At cocktail parties and things, people tell me, 'I don't know how someone like you can write the terribly gloomy things you write,'" Trevor says. "And the answer is that you become a different person as soon as you sit down at the typewriter. I'm very much against the notion that the person and the writer are the same. I was listening to a critic on the wireless yesterday being very rude about David Storey's new play, and he was saying that he couldn't believe that the central character was meant to be an artist, because there was no creativity coming out of him. I thought that really was rubbish. There's no need for the man to *show* his creativity. There's nothing to show. A very staid, ordinary, flannel-suited man can be just as good an artist. Well, at least that's my view—a worthless one, but that's what I think."

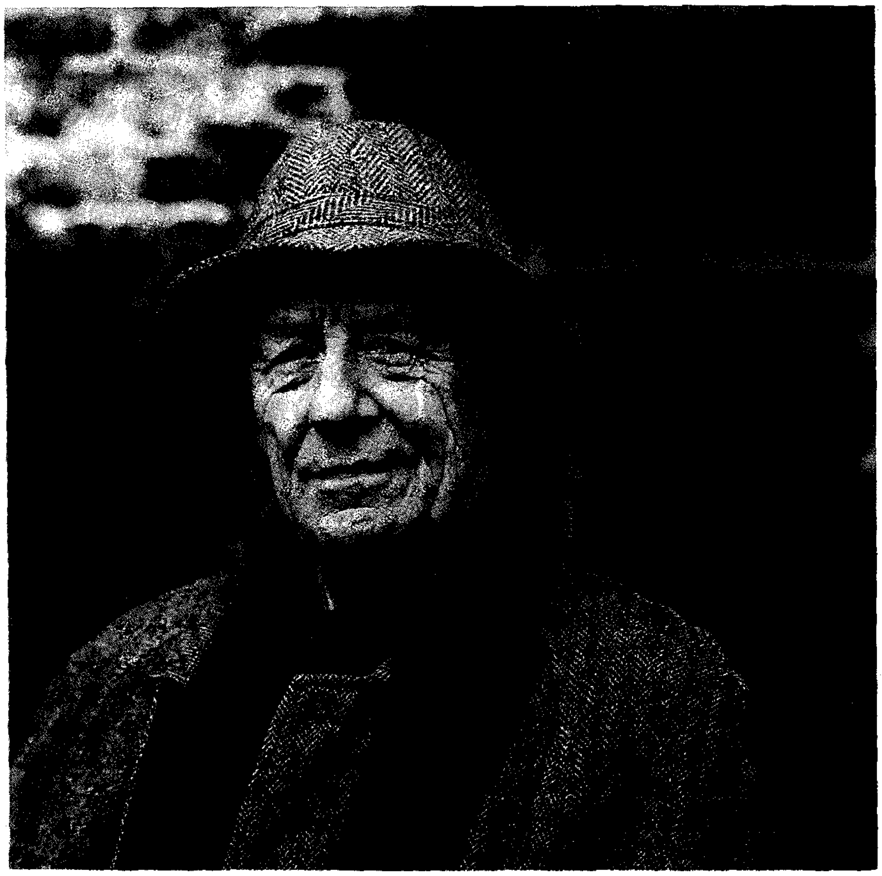
He laughs, which makes him look remarkably like John Gielgud: he has the same monkish bald head and roughly the same crinkles. We are talking in the cozy sitting room of a Devon farmhouse, where he and his wife, Jane, have lived for the last eleven years. The ceilings here are low and the joists a bit off, but then the house is two hundred years old and sits on top of a dried-up well. Outside, there's a picturesquely ruined mill, and, farther afield, a neighbor's sheep graze on Trevor's grassy downs. For all its beauty, the place seems a bit ominous, but Trevor assures me I'm being misled by the sharp wind and pewter skies. When it's not drizzling outside, and the garden is in bloom, it's a wonderful spot, he says, and, besides, its remoteness suits him. "I'm not anti-social, but I am a little bit reclusive. Jane keeps me on the ball as regards that. If she weren't there, I might actually be *very* reclusive."

Jane, in fact, is anything but. As Trevor and I talk, she bounds in and out of the living room, offering tea and, later, a lunch of soup, bread, cheese, and wine. Small, slender, with graying hair cut in a pageboy, Jane is something of a live wire. She is straight-backed and pretty, and she has a disarming way of peering expectantly through her spectacles as you talk, as if you were certain to utter pearls. A volunteer worker at the local hospital, she plainly enjoys company, but as she chats with me through lunch I notice that Trevor has fallen silent. Still, whenever I glance across the table at him he seems intently alert, his head thrust forward as if he were sniffing the conversation for nourishment. Watching him, I find myself experiencing a sensation that some of his friends have warned me about. Trevor, I have been told, is always on the lookout for "material."

Their two sons are grown now, and Trevor and Jane, who have been married forty years, spend a good deal of time travelling: trips to London, trips to Italy, trips to Switzerland. Yet everywhere Trevor goes he manages to write; in fact, he feels he has to. "I get very depressed and very melancholy if I don't," he says. "That's a problem. If I don't do a certain amount every day, I become edgy and difficult. All my books, you'll notice, are dedicated to Jane—because I'm a difficult man to be married to. But my friends don't see all that, because it's channelled in the direction of the stories. It's as though that were the talent—to be able to do that, to harness it and make something of it instead of suffering from it. That's what I do. I just get on with it, trying to dream up a story or two."

A story or two? His "Collected Stories," which have just been published by Viking Penguin, run to 1,261 pages—eighty-seven tales in all, and that's not counting his ten novels and three novellas, and various television, radio, and stage plays he's cobbled together. The story collection is monumental, and something of an event, for, despite his periodic appearances in the pages of this magazine, Trevor is too little known in America. We don't see the TV adaptations that have appeared on the BBC since the sixties, sometimes at the rate of two or three a year, nor do we hear much about the prizes he wins with intimidating regularity (among them the Hawthornden, in 1964, for his first novel, "The Old Boys"; two Whitbreads, for "The Children of Dynmouth," in 1976, and "Fools of Fortune," in 1983; the Booker Prize shortlist, in 1991, for "Two Lives"; and, in 1977, an honorary Commander of the British Empire "in recognition of his services to literature"). Besides, Trevor isn't sexy; he isn't "hot."

His work feels traditional and straightforward: the voice you hear in it is calm, imperturbable, ruffled only occasionally by a puff of grandiloquence or a backward Irish lilt. ("Odd as square eggs they were," says the demented young hero of "The Children of Dynmouth." "Ridiculous it was, the woman saying she hadn't a sister.") Reading other contemporary writers of his stature—Norman Mailer or John Updike or Philip Roth, for instance—one feels the vibrancy of the writer behind the tale, but Trevor's personality is almost as elusive on the page as off. His is the featureless voice of a documentary narrator, the soothing, neutral cadence of a teller of fairy tales in a small-town library. (One of his stories actually begins with the words "Once upon a time.") In an age when bombastic prose styles alternate with trendy minimalism, Trevor's pellucid tone seems almost subversive. He doesn't go in for obliquity and indirection, he's not a great metaphorist, and, though his authorial sensibility would seem to be anything but rebellious, he refuses to obey the rules set forth by such masters as Poe and James—there's no unity of time or place or effect, no adherence to point of view. Trevor goes where the story leads him, and when the point of view has to leap, he leaps—always taking care that the reader doesn't catch him in midair.



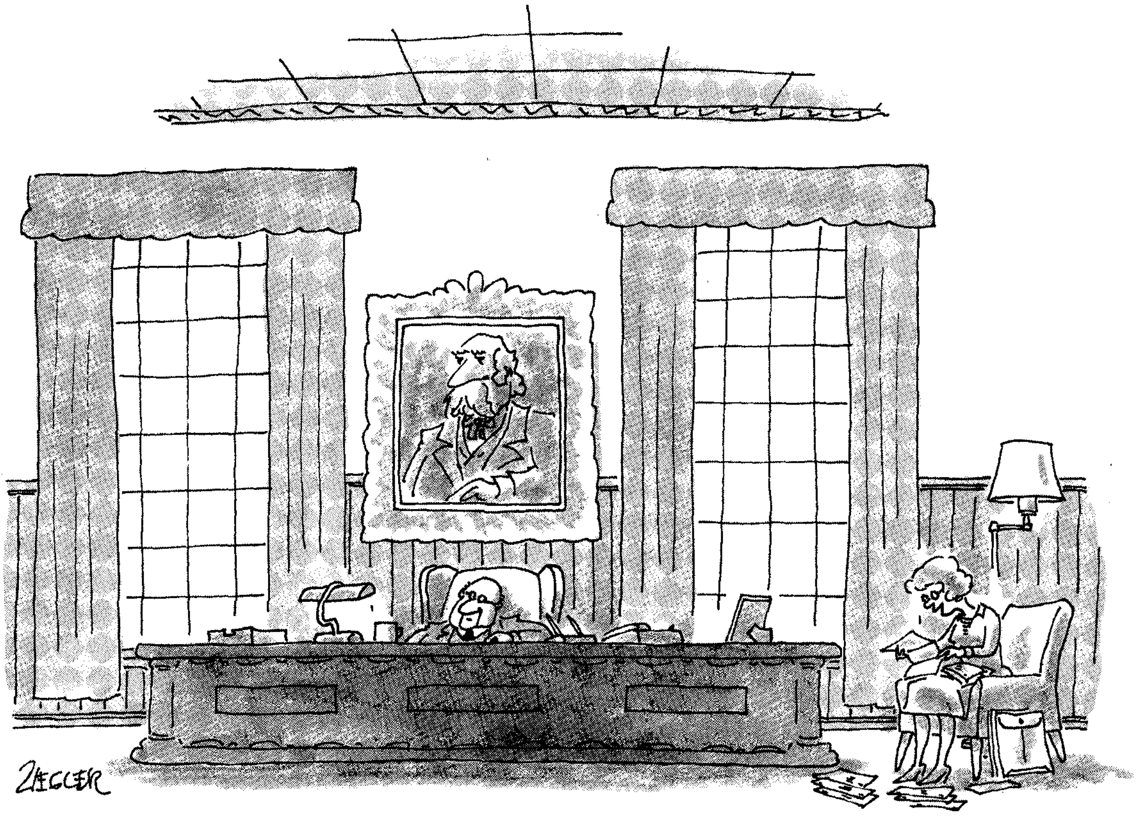
"I think writers and any artists belong outside, on the edge, looking in."

Yet, if the writing seldom calls attention to itself, it is nevertheless intensely evocative; one feels as though Trevor were sitting in the very place he is describing, not waxing eloquent, not blooming into simile, just telling us what's there. His sixties stories have a wondrous sense of sixties-ness, of youthquake and space-out and sexual abandon; his seventies stories darken and brood, and the cloud that hangs over them is often the troubles in Northern Ireland, which cleave relationships hundreds of miles away as surely as a newly revealed adultery. His more recent stories take him to the past, often an Irish past, and Trevor increasingly seems to take the long view, watching the way family curses infect generations, the way national curses continue over centuries. His writing is amazingly consistent from decade to decade; the times change, but his eye does not. When he's funny—and he's often savagely funny—it's hard to divine just where the belly laughs come from, because the architecture of his humor is so subtle: layers of sympathy for his characters interlaced with layers of irony about their foolishness. He can be lyrical, too, but in the quietest, most demure fashion; it's the lyricism of an Irish housekeeper humming to herself as she makes the beds.

As certainly as there is a bluegrass-and-swimming-pool suburbia that will forever be remembered as Cheever Country, there must also be a Trevor Territory: backward villages in England or Ireland with narrow streets full of dogs and bicycles and small boys and nuns, and, here and there, the odd dwarf or sex-crazed town simpleton. Generally you'll find a pub packed with burly stout-drinkers, generally a factory on the outskirts that makes something banal, sandpaper or charcoal or nails, and generally a population of vacantly grinning, slightly disturbed children who will someday go to work in the sandpaper or charcoal factory—if the hungry fates that preside over every Trevor story don't gobble them up first. A lot of his people live in rectories, farmhouses, or grand manses going to ruin, and almost all of them are terribly lonely, or are about to be. His most famous story, "The Ballroom of Romance," is about a rural Irish dance hall, where solitary men and women, mostly edging toward forty, come with the hope of finding love and leave with the certainty that they will not. More often, though, Trevor traces the unravelling of a relationship as though it were inevitable, a fall from some unearned grace: a foster mother who watches herself give up her beloved daughter to the daughter's real mother; an adulterous couple whose fiery relationship goes cold the moment they decide to stop sneaking around; a husband who stands by helplessly as his wife's fantasies devolve into dementia. "My view is a pessimistic view," he admits. "But being as pessimistic as I am doesn't mean that you are constantly stringing yourself up from a beam. I always imagine the worst, but it's not something that turns me into a maniac of depression. I'm not."

Trevor approaches his rural loners with a kind of compassionate solicitude, but when he turns his attention to urban life—life far from Trevor Territory—he can be lacerating. During the sixties, he spent some time in London in the ad-

PHOTOGRAPH BY SNOWDON



"Ah, here's some good news, Mr. Gormley. It seems you've been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame."

vertising business, and he's a master at capturing the vacant chatter of city slickers over cocktails, the feints of office predators closing in on their prey, the mingy angst of fraying couples at wife-swapping parties. Still, being Trevor, he usually adopts the viewpoint of the least sophisticated merrymaker at the gathering—the naïve new secretary or the jilted housewife or, in one of his funniest stories, a man named Raymond Bamber, who manages paradoxically to fascinate the reader by demonstrating what it's like to be the world's most colossal bore.

The effect of a Trevor story, or even a Trevor novel (which he describes as no more than "a lot of linked-up short stories"), is usually this: we spy his characters from afar, as though we were tourists entering their neighborhood; then, all at once, we find ourselves inhabiting their minds. Occasionally, Trevor invents diaries or letters to draw us in, but these often falter—mostly because they're too polished, too literary. At his best, Trevor doesn't resort to any formal device at all. He just slips us inside the characters, and we come to know our way around so quickly and in such detail that when they do something completely unexpected or shocking, as they always do, we understand perfectly—even when their behavior seems misguided, even when it seems evil. Here is the source of Trevor's real greatness: not some moist, world-embracing sympathy but something more profound—the mixture of compassion and horror which comes of knowing his characters from within, of knowing so much about them that passing judgment on their actions, or deriving a "message" from them, comes to seem simpleminded, beside the point. Trevor's motto might be that of the filmmaker Jean Renoir, speaking through his character Octave in "The Rules of the Game": "There is one thing that is terrible, and that is that everyone has his reasons."

"The thing I hate most of all is the pigeonholing of people," Trevor says. "In the age we live in, we all tend to be pigeonholed, because there are things called images and we all have these images, and I don't believe them. I don't believe in the black-and-white; I believe in the gray shadows, the murkiness, the not quite knowing, and the fact that you can't ever say 'old spinster' or 'dirty old man.' You just cannot say those things—to me they're anathema. And, in a way, I suppose, I write to prove that theory."

There are no heroes or villains in Trevor stories—or, rather, the only villain is circumstance. Even his sturdiest characters are held together by a fragile thread: when some mistake or misperception or, most often, some long-buried truth suddenly arises, the thread snaps; the character unravels. In the three chapters that make up the magisterial story called "Matilda's England" Trevor traces the history of a woman whose entire life is formed by the moldering splendor of a nearby manor: we watch her play tennis there as a child, we watch the place decay while Matilda's father and brother are off fighting the Germans, we watch her marry the manor's ambitious new owner, and then, slowly and very matter-of-factly, fall to pieces. Matilda isn't a very nice person—she's narrow and bigoted and annoyingly compulsive. But by the time the story reaches its climax we know her so well that none of that matters. At an enormous manor-house party her husband gives, a party to which he has invited several people she considers unsuitable, Matilda comes unglued, and Trevor composes the scene with a detached calm that is eerily redolent of her madness:

> I had crossed the hall to the dining room in order to get away from the noise for a moment. I thought I'd sit there quietly for a little; I was surprised to see the food and the candles.
>
> I was alone in the dining room, as I'd guessed I would be. But it wasn't any longer a room you could be quiet in. Everything seemed garish, the red glitter of the wine bottles, the red candles, dish after dish of different food, the cheeses. . . .
>
> I jumbled the food about, dropping pieces of meat into the bowls of cream, cov-

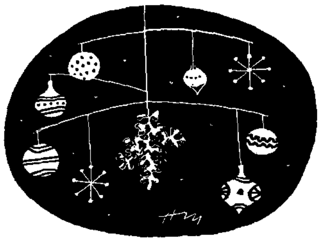
> ering the tarts with salad. I emptied two wine bottles over everything, watching the red stain spreading on the tablecloth and on the cheeses. They had no right to be in the house, their Daimler had no right to be in the garage. I had asked years ago that Mrs Stritch should not be here.
>
> In the drawing room someone said to me: "I enjoy to get out after pheasants, to tramp with my dogs."
>
> It was the short-haired man. I hadn't noticed that he was a foreigner.

The elliptical quality of that passage is terrifying, and it's the very thing that makes Trevor's writing so forceful: he leaves a lot out. That, in fact, is how he manages to stuff a short story with as much emotional incident as most people cram into a novel, without ever straining the tale's skin. The only literary influences he's aware of are the detective novels he devoured in his youth—Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, Sapper's Bulldog Drummond series—and, in a sense, his own stories work the way detective fiction works: the circumstances that will pull someone's world apart are planted discreetly, like clues; gradually, they take root and destroy everything. But it's up to the reader to put the clues together. You won't catch on if you don't stay alert.

"It is important, I think, that there is somebody who is going to do the work you have set out for him," Trevor says. "Because that's what you do—you leave a big chunk of work to be done. It's like a lot of jigsaw pieces, and the reader has got some of them and you've got some of them. People often ask me, 'Whom do you write for? Do you think of a specific person, or an imaginary person, like children have imaginary people that they live with?' I don't think it's quite like that. You simply think of a response. You don't want to see faces. It's the other half of your imagination. It's almost as if you divided your imagination into two and you shoved half of it to the other side of the table, and then you tried to blend them together again."

Trevor achieves his omniscience the hard way: by living with his characters day and night and writing down *everything* about them, much in the manner of an actor creating his character's "back story." "There *is* a lot of the ham actor in writers," he says. "You have to be able to imagine what it's like, to act out. There is a story I once wrote about a young maid who went to work in a publican's house—she was seventeen or so—and I had to really try to understand what she felt like when she was doing the most mundane things in the world, setting the table every day and being tormented by her employer, and I had to act the part out. Each character is somebody that I get to know very, very well—as well as I know myself. You become very interested in that person. You become immensely inquisitive and immensely curious. When people ask me why I have written so much about women, it is out of curiosity about women, because I am not a woman. When I first began to write, I wrote about the elderly, because I was not old. I really wanted to find out what it felt like to walk across a room when you were eighty-three, and where it hurt, and everything else. I think you must be hugely curious about your characters. You get obsessed, and what obsesses you is the determination to work out who the hell that man or woman is. That is something that you wake up and think about; that's the stuff that makes you abstracted and tetchy and bad company at a dinner party—you feel that these people around you aren't real and the people that are in your mind are.

"You have to know all sorts of things about the characters that the reader is not going to be bothered with—that he's not even going to be told. I don't mind writing an awful lot of stuff about people and then letting it end up in the wastepaper basket—or sometimes getting rid of the character completely. Very often, I write a lot and then I realize that that particular bit shouldn't be there at all, it should be somewhere else, so I just cut it out with scissors and paste it in with actual glue, exactly like editing a film. I quite like the mess—these long strips of paper the typist gets, like wallpaper. If you create a character and he's acting in an eccentric way and you don't know why, but on page 110 you realize why, that's going to change page 4. So you must go back. And to me that's very fascinating. By the end, you should be inside your character, actually operating from within somebody else, and knowing him pretty well, as that person knows himself or herself. You're a sort of predator, an invader of people."



Yet the people Trevor invades are often remarkably primitive, with aspirations so tiny as to seem stunted: all they want out of life is to learn to drive a car, for instance, or to work in that blasted sandpaper factory, or—in the story called "Flights of Fancy"—to be made love to, just once, by almost anyone. When I ask him how someone of his sophistication can navigate a mind so simple, he protests. "I don't think of myself as anything but as simple as that walloping bore Raymond Bamber," he says. "I don't belong to any literary group in London or anywhere—the Hampstead group, or whatever; I don't see a lot of other writers. And when I do they often say to me, 'What do you *do* down there?' And I say, 'Well, I go into the local town, and buy things in the hardware shop, and these people there are interesting.' I really believe that. They *are* interesting. They're just as interesting as the smartest conversation at the smartest dinner party in London. I am actually a very inquisitive person. I'm much more interested in you than I am in myself. And I've always found this. There's nothing I want to say ever in my fiction about myself. I don't come into my fiction at all. But everyone *else* is a potential candidate. I was brought up in very simple provincial towns. My parents were farming stock on both sides. They were both bank clerks, but there was no sort of brilliant wit or anything. There was just ordinary life going on. I come from a completely unliterary family."

And a somewhat unhappy one. Trevor's parents battled continually throughout his childhood, finally splitting up when Trevor and his siblings—an older sister and a younger brother—were grown. "They had the misguided notion of staying together for the children," Trevor recalls. "But there's nothing that children dislike more than having that terrible atmosphere in the house, because you're always there and you just can't escape it. I think it made me realize that you've got to work at marriage. I remember saying that to Jane when we were first together—it's hard work, this."

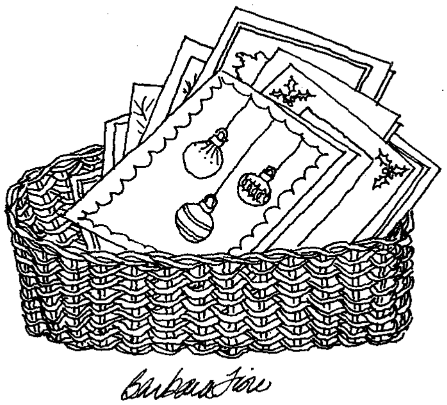
He was born William Trevor Cox, in the village of Mitchelstown, County

Cork, Ireland, but as his father clambered up the career ladder at the Bank of Ireland his family kept moving from one hamlet to another—Youghal, Skibbereen, Tipperary Town—and then to Galway. "It was a very gypsylike childhood," Trevor says. "Friendships were broken easily, and also my parents' friendships. And something that is affected is the education. I went to an enormous number of schools in Ireland, and there were these huge, big gaps in between schools. So I have gaps in my education—which is not a bad thing for a writer. I think it's a good thing." I ask him why, and he grins his Gielgud grin. "Agatha Christie used to say that—that's why I say it," he replies. "But I think that this neat upbringing, this neat life, is not quite as productive as a sort of mucky, messy life and childhood. Certainly I don't look back on the moving-about business with any sorrow or sadness or anything like that at all."

Still, it did make him a perpetual outsider, and he was an outsider in another way as well. For Trevor was that oddity, a Protestant in Southern Ireland—and not the kind of upper-crust Ascendancy Protestant such as appears in the stories of Elizabeth Bowen. Trevor was a lace-curtain Protestant, part of the class of vassals and camp followers that serviced the Protestant landed gentry until the Anglo-Irish War of 1919-21. By the time he was born, in 1928, Ireland had become Catholic, and a Free State; the Ascendancy was over, and the Protestants who remained felt neither here nor there. They were, as Trevor once put it in *The Paris Review*, "a sliver of people caught between the past—Georgian Ireland with its great houses and all the rest of it—and the new, bustling Catholic state." Again and again, Trevor's fictions return to the mansions that the English left behind them in Ireland; again and again, he portrays oblivious newcomers who want to spiff up the great houses, and old-timers who want to let them crumble and die, so that the memories of blood and tyranny can die with them. Trevor says he can recall no instance of religious bigotry in his youth, but children like him, children of the "sliver," were bound to grow up wary and circumspect. And the lace-curtain atmosphere pervades a lot of his work: he must have lived with an acute sense of the "mucky, messy" lives being led behind the genteel Protestant veneer, not least in his own harrowed home. Trevor's stories bristle at neatness and repression, and they often pivot on the actions of a character who insists on ripping the curtains away, on telling the truth and exposing the hypocrites, even when that means devastating his own life and the lives around him. "My shorthand view of a William Trevor story is this," his friend Robert Cooper, who has produced several Trevor adaptations for television, says. "It's William arriving in a rather beautiful place and saying, 'Oh, this looks lovely. I bet it's not.' And then writing the story that proves it."

As a child, Trevor toyed with being a writer, simply because he was better at it than most of the other children he knew in the tiny village schools. "But then I went to the last school I was at, and it was a much smarter establishment, in which there were lots of people who were going to be writers. And under the pressure of this fashion I dropped the idea." He began to sculpt, mostly in wood, and by the time he attended Dublin's Trinity College (where he met Jane) he was confirmed in his new career. Unable to find a "day job" in the hardscrabble Ireland of the early fifties, Trevor took Jane to England; there he taught school to support his sculpting, and then, when their first child was about to be born, they moved to London and he joined Notley's, the advertising firm, to make ends meet. "I was very, very bad at it," he recalls. "I wasn't exactly sacked at the end, but when I resigned, the copy chief said, 'Yes. We were going to mention that to you.' "

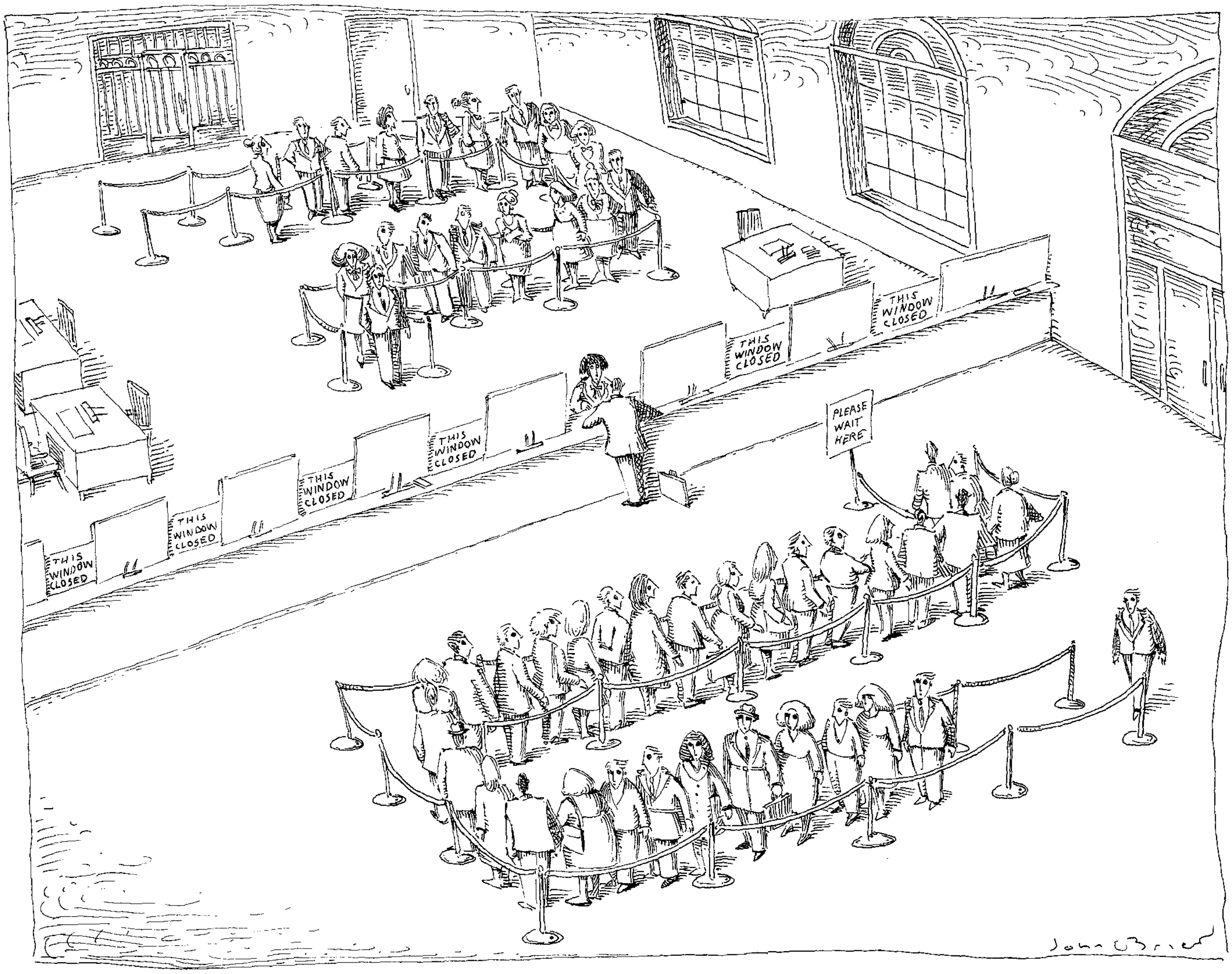
Meanwhile, sculpture had come to seem a dead end. For years, as William Trevor Cox, he had been a church sculptor—"I fancied myself as a Jude the Obscure"—carving Madonnas and John the Baptists in a somewhat overwrought, mannerist style that now looks very fifties. Gradually, however, his work changed. He shows me some of it, a couple of pieces that hang in his foyer: they are smooth rectangles of wood, scooped out here and there and studded with clusters of small cream-colored squares that look like tiles. The sculptures resemble nothing so much as aerial views of a military target, and I'm not terribly surprised when Trevor tells me, "My sculpture became too abstract. There weren't any people in it anymore, and I didn't like it. That was quite a dramatic thing. I had been a sculptor for sixteen or seventeen years, and I more or less woke up one morning and decided I didn't like what I was doing. It was the absence of humanity in it—I became bored with that. I was working in that small office writing advertisements at the time, with not actually an awful lot to do, and it was then that I began to write short stories."



He was thirty-two—a late bloomer, as writers go. While he was still sculpting, he had written an autobiographical fragment called "A Standard of Behavior," which he doesn't generally include in his canon. "I don't dislike the poor thing; I'm not against it in any way," he says. "It's just that it was done to make money, so I can't be as fond of it as I was of the others, which weren't written like that." But the others proved much more successful. His short stories were published in magazines as quickly as he could write them, and his first serious novel, "The Old Boys," published in 1964, when he was thirty-six, was a hit: it became a radio play and a television play, and no less than Evelyn Waugh pronounced it "uncommonly well written, gruesome, funny, and original." Trevor was launched. Yet his life changed very little. Living in Devon now, he continued to shun the literary whirl, continued to cultivate his position as an outsider.

He still does. "He's a private man," his friend the filmmaker Pat O'Connor says. "He finds the pursuit of glory and fame fairly horrendous. In crowds of people, he's utterly charming, but he's always looking for the door. He wants an escape route nearby."

"Actually, I don't believe that as a writer I belong in society at all," Trevor says. "I think writers and any artists be-



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long outside, on the edge, looking in. Because society is, after all, our meat; society is what we comment on in some way. I think the feeling of not belonging is very strong in me. In order to write about people, you have got actually to stand back quite a distance. I feel much happier having a one-to-one conversation than being in a room full of people—I feel very shy then, and want to get back into the shadows. The shadows are where I think I belong."

But doesn't he at least belong to Ireland? For a moment he looks startled, his tufted red eyebrows hoisting up those drapelike lids, his pale-blue eyes popping. "I am Irish absolutely to the last vein in my body," he says, and his voice falls into an Erin-go-bragh singsong. "When the car lands at Rosslare, or when the plane lands at Dublin or Cork, or when the green jerseys come onto the rugby pitch—even though they haven't won a rugby game for the last ten years—there's still that tremor of excitement, and you know you're Irish all over again. It's the country you put first, the country you feel strongest about, the country that you actually love. And I'm aware of that all the time—perhaps more aware of it not living in Ireland than I would be if I had stayed. If I had stayed in Ireland, in a little town like Skibbereen, I certainly wouldn't have written. I needed the distance in order to write."

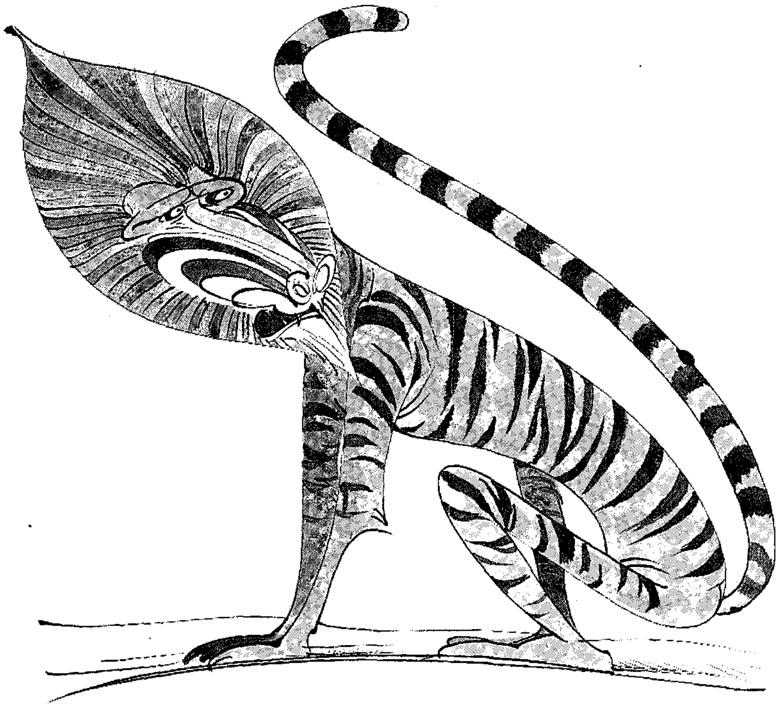
Lately, he has been writing about the past. Even as he prepares a new radio adaptation of his novella "My House in Umbria" (from his book "Two Lives"), he is also piecing together what his editor, Euan Cameron, calls "an autobiography." Actually, it's a book of essays, some short and some longer, and Trevor says that it's "half about people I've met that you wouldn't normally meet, half about landscapes, places that I like." And, in the midst of explaining all that, he turns to me and asks, very politely, "When were you wanting to go?"

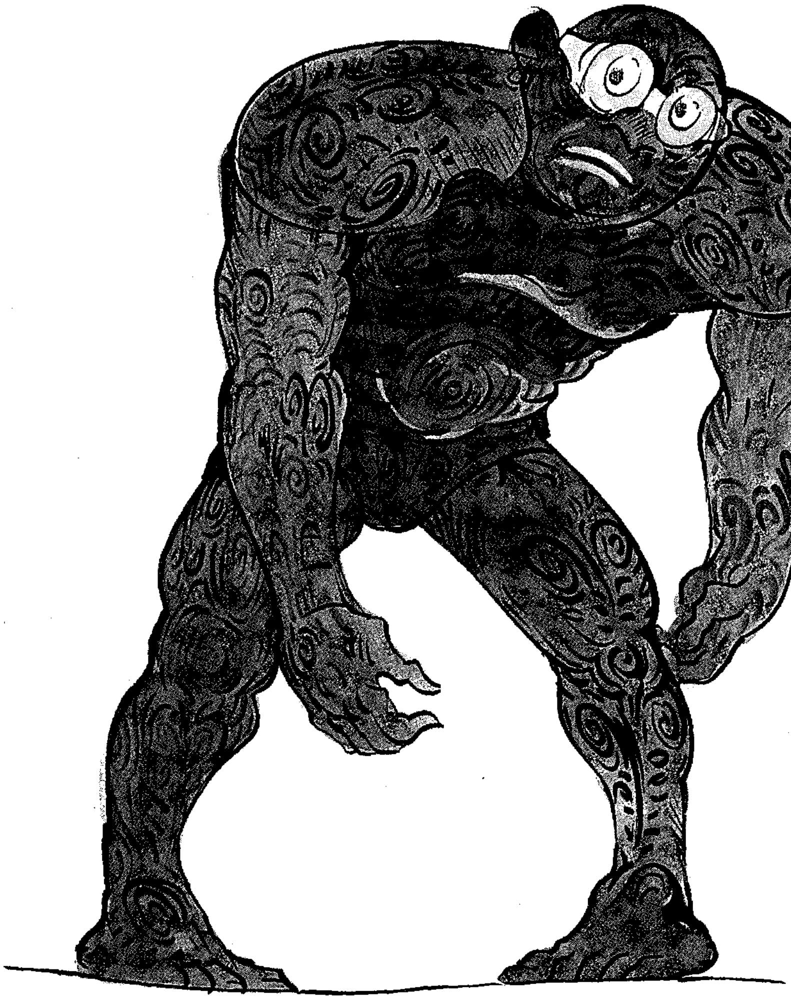
Dusk has fallen in Devon. It's time to relieve him of the burden of explaining himself—of examining the storyteller from the vantage point of the man. As I take my leave, I imagine him returning to the small, round writing desk in the next room with a kind of glee, a boy liberated from study hall to play once again among the characters he loves. But when I relate what I'm thinking, Trevor shakes his head, hiking his red brows until the checkerboards break out above his eyes. "No," he says. "No, no, no. I wouldn't accept that. I would say that writing is a serious business with me, and there isn't much play there. Writing's a killer. It's difficult and obsessive. It's possessive. It's heartbreaking. But I wouldn't have it otherwise." ♦

ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOK

MOZART'S FLUTE

by Gerald Scarfe

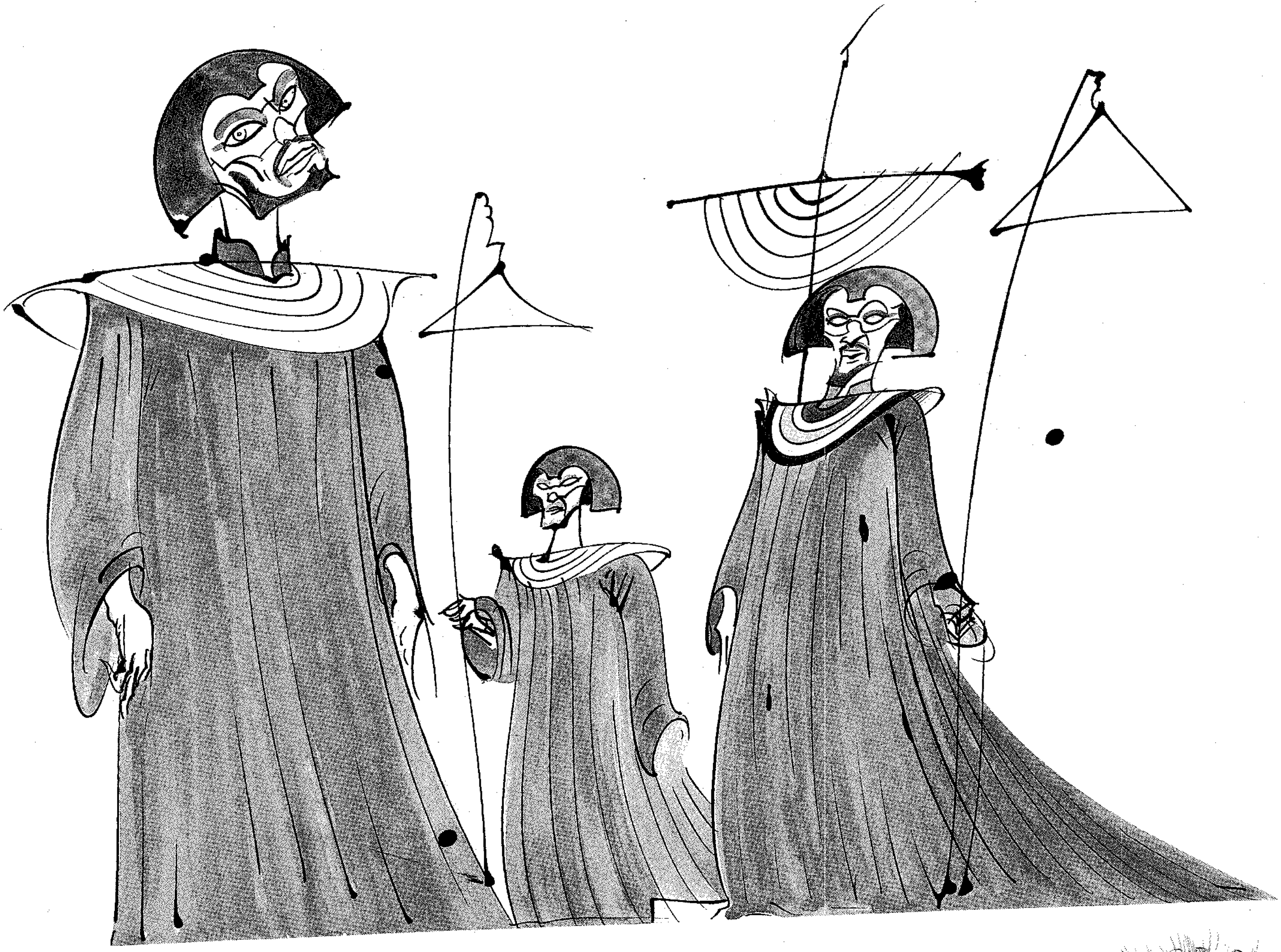


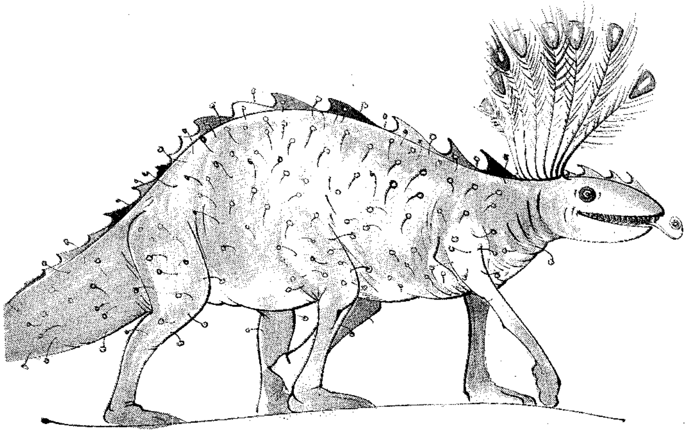


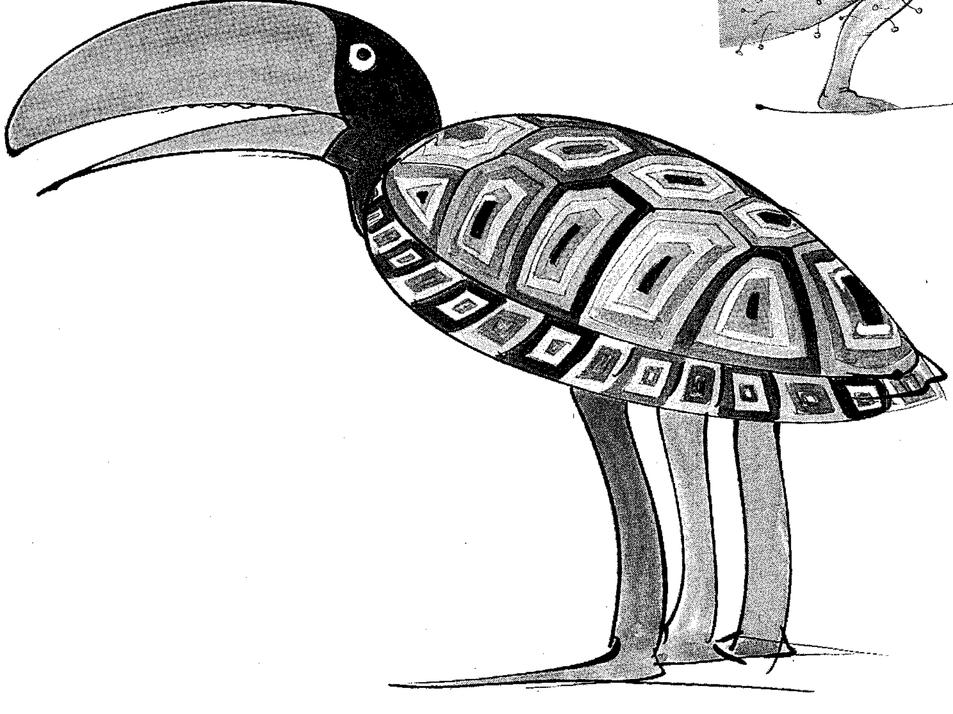
A SMALL corrective dose of wariness seems the right response to a new design for "The Magic Flute." Do we really need another "Flute"? Even the muddled, hopelessly outclassed, easily confused non-opera buff can vaguely recall Chagall's fruitily "lyrical" designs, in which Mozart was made to look like Offenbach. And then wasn't there something from Hockney, done in his familiar spare, schoolboy drawing mode, with Steinbergian pyramids on long Egyptian horizons? *Basta!* "A work that lasts two hundred years is tough," Auden wrote once, in a poem about "The Magic Flute," "And operas, God knows, must stand enough: What greatness made, small vanities abuse." Perhaps the only really good place left to stage "The Magic Flute" would be in miniature on the back of a dollar bill, whose solemn, absurd Masonic symbols have exactly the right weight and the right associations for Mozart's sublime, ridiculous pageant.

But, from the look of things, the designs that Gerald Scarfe has offered for a new production of the "Flute" which will début in Los Angeles at the end of January may just work. Scarfe's vision is by Disney out of du Maurier—part "Fantasia" and part turn-of-the-century *Punch.* Orange is their tonic color—the orange of the sun, of course, but also the orange of a child's drawings. Scarfe we know best as a satirist, and though his designs are not wearingly "revisionist," they do seem, lightheartedly, to be making a necessary Mozartean point—that beneath the tunes and the glories Mozart knew which way was up, and had a first-class comic imagination. Scarfe's designs seem to suggest a Gilbert and Sullivan Mozart—and one that will offer, if not exactly a disenchanted "Flute," then at least one wary of the simpler kinds of magic.

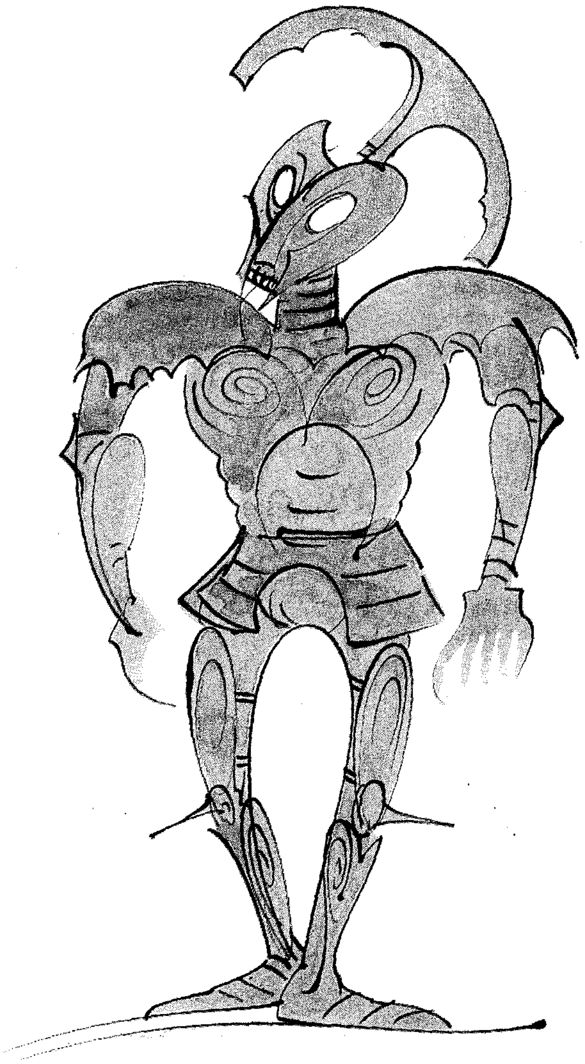
—ADAM GOPNIK

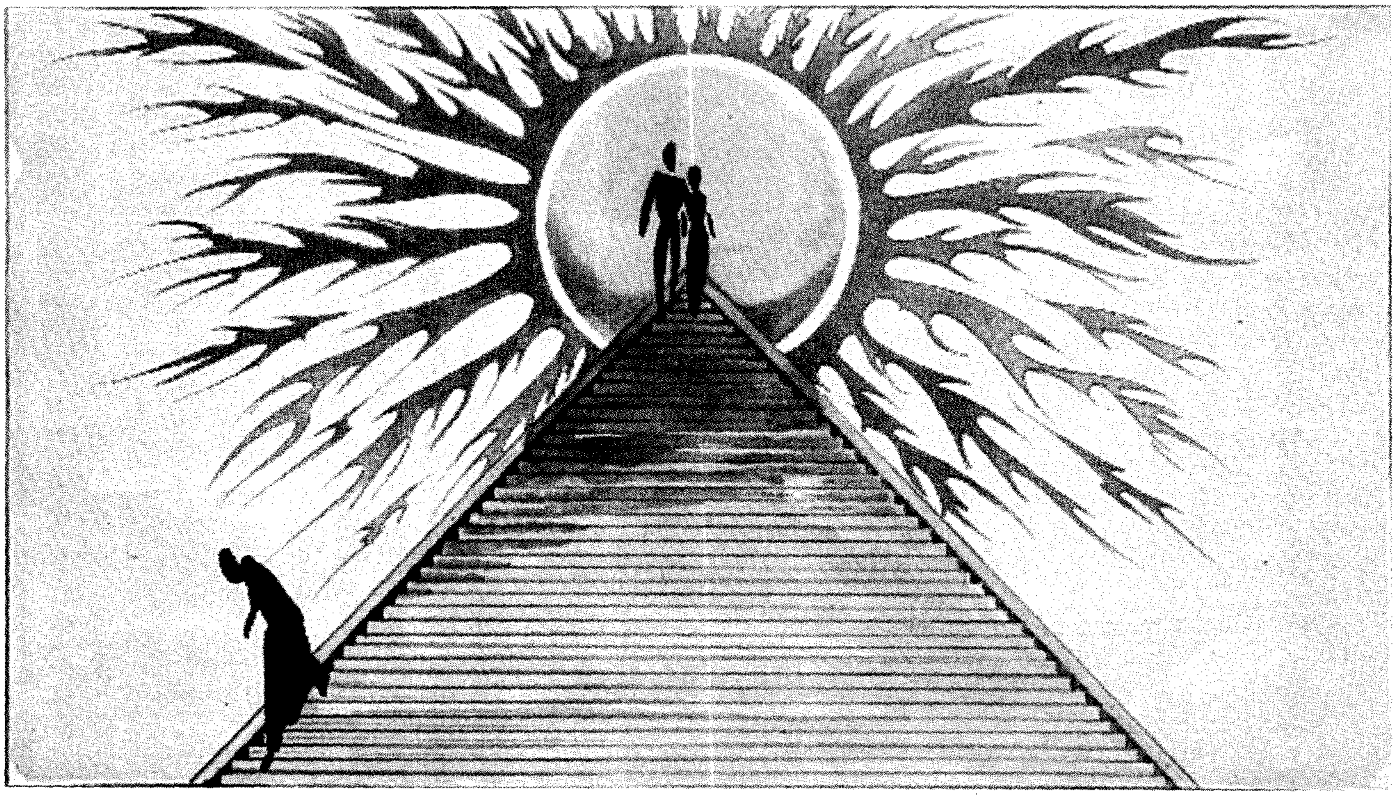






The blissfully smiling creatures shown here, their brute nature transformed by the power of music, make Mr. Scarfe's intentions clear.
In its blazing, triumphant absurdity, his "Magic Flute" will glide over the ponderous Masonic subtext and celebrate the ritual, color, and extravagant fantasy of the opera.





FICTION

NATIVITY

by Christopher Hope

NATHAN SWIRSKY came to Badminton in the Christmas week of 1950. Badminton was a new housing estate built outside Johannesburg for returning soldiers. Swirsky, however, was English, or so he said. My mother didn't believe him. "English or Jewish?" she said. "He can't have it both ways."

He arrived wearing a most deadly mustache. The back window of his Opel Kapitän was piled with bottles of Mercurochrome and packets of Joywear stretch nylons in shades like Bali Rose and Jamaica Rum. Within what seemed about two minutes flat, he had opened a pharmacy, built in the window a castle from green cough-drop boxes, and hung above it a silver star on a length of fishing line. "*Grüss' Gott*," he said to Papas, who ran the Greek Tearoom, at the end of the line of shops on Charles Drive which served the estate. "They say that all the time in Switzerland. It means 'God's greeting.' I've just been abroad, as you can probably guess."

"I was born abroad," Papas said. "Abroad is where I began."

Within a few days, Swirsky had painted "A Merry Xmas to All My Customers" in shaving cream along the length of his window, just above the green turrets of his cough-drop castle and just below the silver star on the fishing line. The heat of December dried the shaving cream, and he replaced his Christmas message each day. With my friend Sally from across the road, I liked to watch him. We would kneel on the pavement and rest our elbows on the ledge of Swirsky's window. We called it "going to see the show." Sally said it was better than going to the bioscope in Orange Grove. I agreed, even though I had never been to the bioscope—just because Sally said it so nicely.

At three in the afternoon, Swirsky would lift his white coat, like a skirt, and climb into the window, lather up the shaving mug he carried, and write the message again, his tongue between his teeth. "I have to letter it the wrong way round," he told us once. "Leonardo da Vinci did something like this. *Avanti!*"

Swirsky was soft and pink. His black hair was combed in a center parting, and his eyes were the color of the blackest olives. He smelled of licorice and Gold Flake cigarettes.

That rather amused our neighbor Gus Trupshaw. "Gold Flake is the man's cigarette that women like," he said to my father as they sat in the ex-servicemen's club in the corner of the kindergarten hall. I sat under a plastic palm tree, sipping lemonade.

"I've never understood what women like," said my father.

"You're missing the point, Gordon," Gus Trupshaw said.

My father breathed out hard. "I see what you mean!"

"What does he mean?" I asked.

"Little pitchers have big ears," Gus Trupshaw said.

"If I told you, Martin, your mother would murder me." My father looked at me. "Let's not break up the happy home, shall we?"

Swirsky's white chemist coats were the loveliest ever seen. He washed, starched, and ironed them himself. They were wafer-thin, each thread frozen so crisp that you heard him crackle.

"How that man manages without a servant I cannot imagine," said my mother. "Of course, I suppose if you travel as much as he does, a servant is just too much bother. Like keeping a cat. What do you do with it when you head for the bright lights?"

SWIRSKY'S mustache was black, sharp, shiny. It was honed to a razor's edge—jet-fighter wings beneath his nose. Sally liked it so much she copied it in black eyeliner she got from her ma's sample case, and she rolled down the grass bank in her garden shouting "*Avanti! Avanti!*" until her brother Tony told her mother and she made Sally take it off.

"Have a little respect, my girl. I happen to represent that line in cosmetics myself," she said, and drove off in her light-blue Austin A30. Sally's mother was a travelling saleswoman. Tony watched her: "There goes my Ma, the queen of perfumes."

"You are such a total drip!" Sally told her brother. She turned her wide blue eyes to me. "Let's go and look in Swirsky's window, Mart. But we won't take Tony."

Tony followed about ten steps behind us, all the way to Swirsky's shop, and every now and then Sally said, "I think there must be someone following us, Mart. I can smell something."

Tony said, "Well, it's a free country. I can walk wherever I want."

Eric came by from next door with his little brother Sammie. Sammie knew so much. He was little and dark, with big brown glasses on the end of his nose, and he could hurl clay balls faster and harder than anyone else when we had fights down by the riverbank and used long whips of willow to launch them. If he hit you plumb center, Sammie could knock you down. Eric was whistling "The Railroad Runs Through the Middle of the House." Sammie said, "Did you know that when the King and Queen came to South Africa a few years ago, the King made this lady-in-waiting swim out to sea and pretend to be drowning just so that he could watch the lifeguards rescue her?"

"Rubbish," said Sally. "The King would never do that."

But Sammie went right on. "Swimming close by her was a certain major, and he really thought she was drowning, so he rescued her first. Then she told him that it was all a joke."

"Don't tell lies," Sally said, very shocked.

"I believe you," called Tony from way behind us.

"Why is Tony walking behind us?" Eric asked.

"Who?" said Sally and looked around, shaking her head. "I don't see anyone."

Sally and I went inside. Swirsky was in his shopwindow on his hands and knees, fixing a pup tent, midway between a pyramid of aspirins and a tree made entirely of boxes of syrup of figs. "I'm trying to build a Nativity scene," he said. "It's not really my line of country. But I must tell you that I have visited the original—when I was in Israel. Bethlehem is a lovely little town. I can recommend it, when you're next down that way."

A small crowd of black servants watched from the other side of the glass. Swirsky lathered up his shaving mug and painted his Christmas greeting again. "Leonardo da Swirsky!" The black servants clapped. Tony stood outside the window, pressing his lips to the glass. They looked like the undersides of two pink snails.

With Swirsky directing, we built quite a good manger. Though we didn't have straw, we found a good pile of sawdust in a shipment of German thermometers and used that. Sammie and Eric fetched their lead farmyard animals. Sally offered a doll named Antoinette and an old cradle that had belonged to her Dutch great-grandmother.

"Just wait till Mom finds out you've taken her yellowwood cradle," Tony shouted from the other side of the glass. And Sally said to me, "Did you hear something wet, Martin, something with blobby, drippy lips?" Sammie cut three kings from cardboard and colored them with wax crayons.

"Why is one of the kings black?" Swirsky asked. And when we told him he said, "Fancy that. So there was a black chappie in on all this?"

I offered a statue of Our Lady of Perpetual Succor that had stood in our garage next to the crate of Trotter's jellies. And for the figure of Joseph we used a large wooden puppet of Sinbad the Sailor from the props room down at the kindergarten hall.

"Isn't this a lot of fun?" Swirsky said as he fitted a blue light bulb to the tent pole holding up our manger. "There's more to this Nativity business than meets the eye."

Swirsky's Nativity made people talk all over Badminton. My mother said, "I'm afraid this is rather typical. They're taking over."

"Who are taking over, Monica?" my father wanted to know.

"Did you know, Gordon," my mother demanded, "that Martin has gone and given Mr. Swirsky the statue of Mary for his window? And there is a great crowd of servants dressed to the nines outside that window day and night. When Margot Van Reen and I went to the tearoom today, we had to step off the pavement and walk round them. If this goes on, I foresee ugly scenes by Boxing Day. Mark my words."

"Putting a Christmas crib in your shopwindow is not against the law," my father said. "At least not yet. But who knows? Judging by the way this bunch of Fascists who run this country are carrying on, it might be illegal soon."

"It's not a Christmas message. It's 'Xmas,' according to Mr. Swirsky, if you please," my mother said. "And I'd be very grateful if you didn't use that word. All over the estate children are calling each other Fascists. It's not a word for eight-year-olds. And if you're not careful, the servants will be using it next."

SWIRSKY offered to take us to the Christmas grotto at Anstey's Department Store. My mother said I could go providing that I did not speak to strangers. Eric and Sammie couldn't come because their ma said she wasn't sending her boys shopping with a stranger. Sammie told her that the Christmas lucky dips were free, but she said that nothing in life was free. And then she made her boys take back their lead farmyard animals from Swirsky's window.

"I'm really sorry, Mr. Swirsky," Eric said. "But our ma says that we have to."

"Never mind, boykies," Swirsky said. "The loss of a couple of moo cows won't kill my Nativity."

Sally, Tony, and I drove to the grotto in Swirsky's Opel.

"Remember, Martin," my mother told me before we left, "if you get lost, stay exactly where you are."

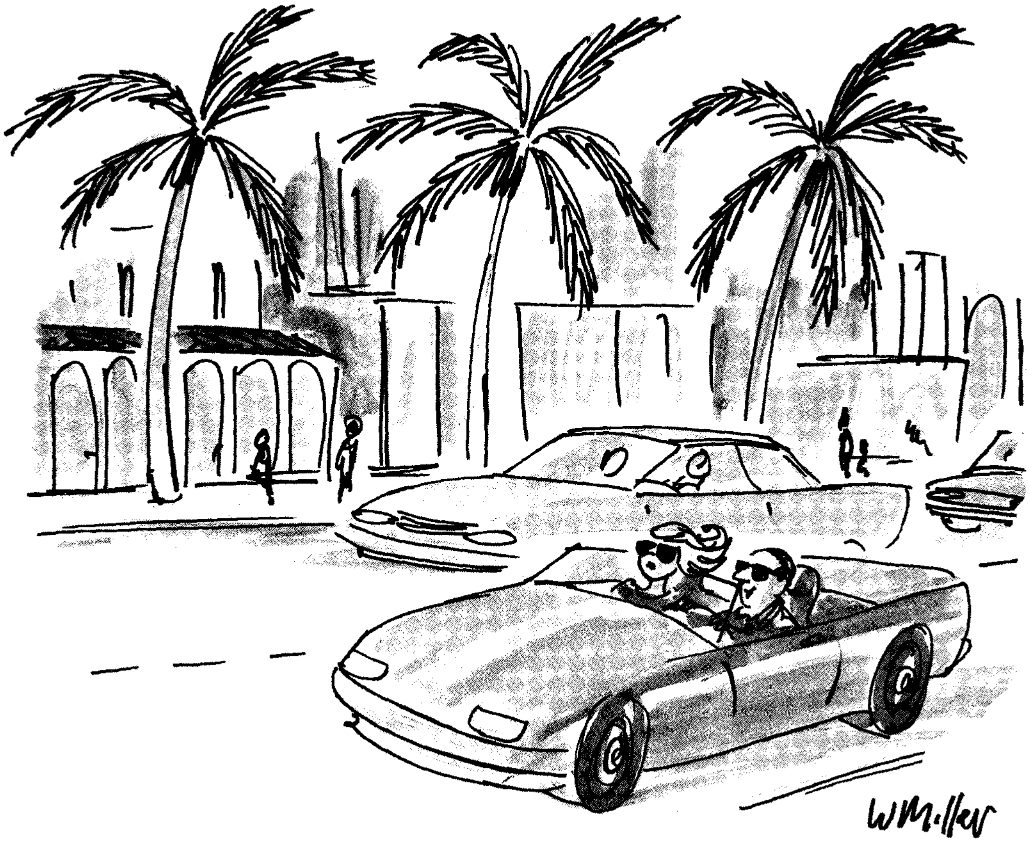
In the Christmas grotto, Father Christmas sat on a red throne bright with silver glitter. Beside him was a reindeer with horns and one big yellow glass eye. It was pulling a sleigh piled with cardboard boxes tied with ribbon. The grotto was very warm and was full of kids holding their mothers' hands. The cardboard boxes in the sleigh had pink ribbons for girls, blue for boys. A sign said, "One dip only per child."

"It looks like a moose," Sally said. "Not a reindeer."

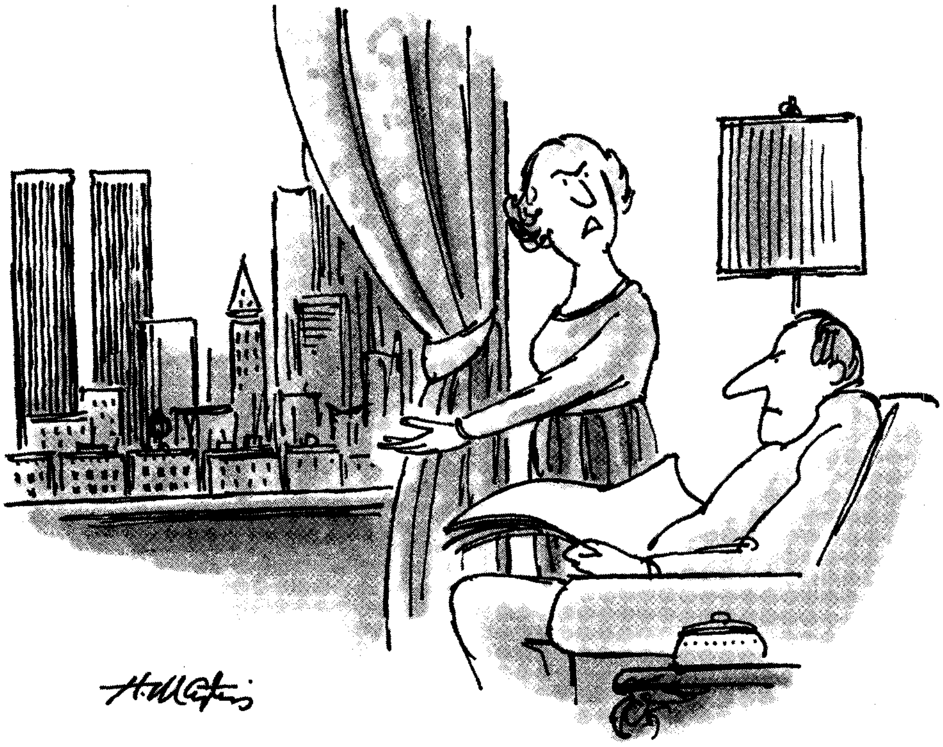
"You've never seen a moose," her brother said.

"If you kids don't simmer down, you can forget about Christmas," a man suddenly said in a rough voice. "And remember, only one dip each."

Father Christmas wore a big cotton-wool beard, and his lips were pink. His hood hung over his eyes. "O.K., boys and



"For some odd reason, finding some more faults makes me love L.A. even more."



"I'll tell you what's happening out there, Willie. Liz Smith's column is what's happening out there!"

girls. Who's first?" Several children began crying.

Tony went first and came back swinging his lucky dip. Swirsky pushed me forward. I looked at Father Christmas's cotton-wool eyebrows. Where his robe ended he showed gray flannels and black shoes. His lips were not only pink, they were wet, and I didn't like to look at them. At least boys could whisper in his ear. Girls had to sit in his lap, and he had this way of spreading his legs so the girls fell into the red gap between them. I told him I wanted a box cart for Christmas. He told me I would have to be very good. I never imagined for a moment that I would ever get a box cart, but what was the point of asking for something you knew you wouldn't get if you didn't go all the way? Papas made them—wooden crates mounted on four pram wheels, and steering shafts wrestled into shape from wire coat hangers. I dreamed of box carts. I saw the steep rise at the top of Henry Street and heard the wind in my ears.

Swirsky pushed Sally forward. Tony whispered to her, "He smells of beer." Sally made as if to go forward, and then she put her chin on her chest and began fiddling with the red bow at her waist. Her toes pointed inward, and the more Swirsky pushed her forward, the more her toes pointed inward. Swirsky left her then and walked over and whispered in the ear of Father Christmas, who wiped sweat from his brow and shook his head. He lifted his cotton eyebrows to the queue. "Next, please," said Father Christmas.

"Sorry, squire, but I'm not going till I get the box," Swirsky said.

"I never knew people like you believed in Christmas," said the man in red.

"I don't believe in *you*," Swirsky said loudly.

Father Christmas stood up. He was a big man. "Is that so?" he said. And he reached up and with a loud tearing sound he ripped off his beard. There were a lot of children crying now.

"I hope you're really pleased with yourself," Tony whispered to his sister.

Then the manageress arrived and made Father Christmas put his beard back on. She gave Swirsky a lucky dip, and led us quickly out of the grotto.

On the way home, we sang "Hold Him Down, You Zulu Warrior," and Swirsky advised us to travel to Rhodesia whenever possible. It was the coming country, he said. He recommended the Leopard Rock Motel. "Baths in every room, and billiards. You look like a billiard player to me," he said to Sally, who sat beside him saying nothing and holding to her chest the lucky dip he had given her.

Inside each lucky dip were six marbles in a canvas bag, a spinning top painted with colors of the rainbow, a cardboard kaleidoscope, three balloons, and a rubber dagger if you were a boy, or a face mirror for girls.

Back in Badminton, we found the crowds had gone from Swirsky's Nativity. Instead, there was a great hole in the window and a lot of glass on the pavement. And there was a brick inside the window. The pup tent had collapsed on the manger. The blue light was still on. The three kings were buried, but they were O.K.; the yellowwood cradle had been tipped over. We helped Swirsky clear the window. The only thing missing was Sally's doll Antoinette, the Christ child.

Mr. Swirsky looked at his broken window. "Well, that wasn't much of a Nativity," he said. "But it was fun while it lasted."

He went over to Papas' place. Papas had a brother in Orange Grove who ran a used-car lot, and from him he got a big wooden crate and boarded up Swirsky's window with pieces of it. When he'd finished, the window read, "N. Rubin and Partners, Potato, Onion, and Poultry Suppliers. Racehorse Feed Specialists, Ship Chandlers."

"My godfathers!" my mother said. "I don't know which looked worse, the crib or the boards."

Gus Trupshaw said that people should keep out of other people's religions. "Tigers don't mate with bears, do they?"

"Excuse me," said my mother. "There was nothing religious about Swirsky's window. Of that we can all be quite sure. As if Christmas wasn't difficult enough. On Christmas Eve all the servants will be drunk. On Boxing Day they'll be round for their Christmas boxes, and before you know it they'll be banging on the street poles and shouting 'Happy! Happy!' And then the New Year will be on us. Where will it end, I ask. Where will it end?"

"I'm sorry about your dolly," said Swirsky to Sally. "I'll get you another."

"It's all right," said Sally. "I hate dolls, really." ♦

FICTION

MLLE. DIAS DE CORTA

by Mavis Gallant

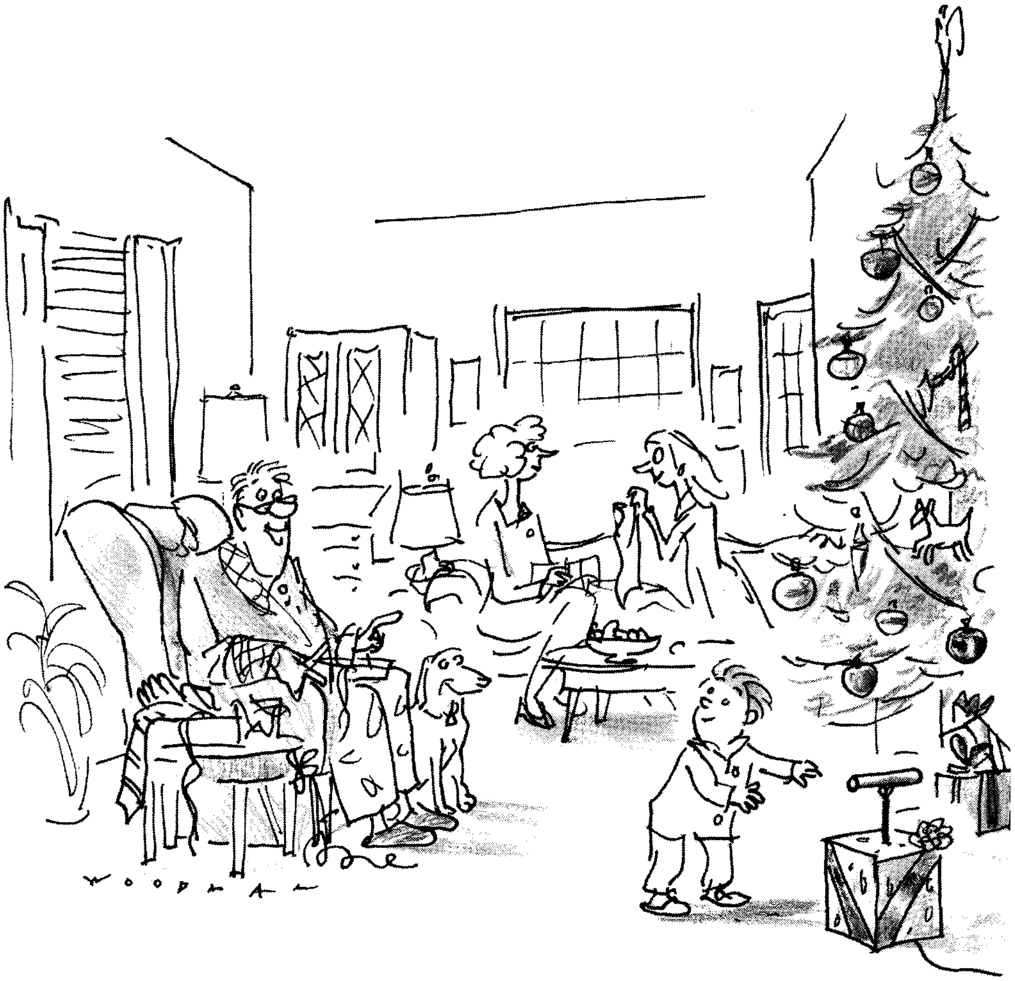
YOU moved into my apartment during the summer of the year before abortion became legal in France; that should fix it in past time for you, dear Mlle. Dias de Corta. You had just arrived in Paris from your native city, which you kept insisting was Marseilles, and were looking for work. You said you had studied television-performance techniques at some provincial school (we had never heard of the school, even though my son had one or two actor friends) and received a diploma with "special mention" for vocal expression. The diploma was not among the things we found in your suitcase, after you disappeared, but my son recalled that you carried it in your handbag, in case you had the good luck to sit next to a casting director on a bus.

The next morning we had our first cordial conversation. I described my husband's recent death and repeated his last words, which had to do with my financial future and were not overly optimistic. I felt his presence and still heard his voice in my mind. He seemed to be in the kitchen, wondering what you were doing there, summing you up: a thin, dark-eyed, noncommital young woman, standing at the counter, bolting her breakfast. A bit sullen, perhaps; you refused the chair I had dragged in from the dining room. Careless, too. There were crumbs everywhere. You had spilled milk on the floor.

"Don't bother about the mess," I said. "I'm used to cleaning up after young people. I wait on my son Robert hand and foot." Actually, you had not made a move. I fetched the sponge mop from the broom closet, but when I asked you to step aside you started to choke on a crust. I waited quietly, then said, "My husband's illness was the result of eating too fast and never chewing his food." His silent voice told me I was wasting my time. True, but if I hadn't warned you I would have been guilty of withholding assistance from someone in danger. In our country, a refusal to help can be punished by law.

The only remark my son Robert made about you at the beginning was "She's too short for an actress." He was on the first step of his career climb in the public institution known then as Post, Telegrams, Telephones. Now it has been broken up and renamed with short, modern terms I can never keep in mind. (Not long ago I had the pleasure of visiting Robert in his new quarters. There is a screen or a machine of some kind everywhere you look. He shares a spacious office with two women. One was born in Martinique and can't pronounce her "R"s. The other looks Corsican.) He left home early every day and liked to spend his evenings with a set of new friends, none of whom seemed to have a mother. The mis-teachings of the seventies, which encouraged criticism of earlier generations, had warped his natural feelings. Once, as he was going out the door, I asked if he loved me. He said the answer was self-evident: we were closely related. His behavior changed entirely after his engagement and marriage to Anny Clarens, a young lady of mixed descent. (Two of her grandparents are Swiss.) She is employed in the accounting department of a large hospital and enjoys her work. She and Robert have three children: Bruno, Elodie, and Félicie.

It was for companionship rather than



"No, no, Timmy. Not that one. I'm saving that one for last."

income that I had decided to open my home to a stranger. My notice in *Le Figaro* mentioned "young woman only," even though those concerned for my welfare, from coiffeur to concierge, had strongly counselled "young man." "Young man" was said to be neater, cleaner, quieter, and (except under special circumstances I need not go into) would not interfere in my relationship with my son. In fact, my son was seldom available for conversation and had never shown interest in exchanging ideas with a woman, not even one who had known him from birth.

You called from a telephone on a busy street. I could hear the coins jangling and traffic going by. Your voice was low-pitched and agreeable and, except for one or two vowel sounds, would have passed for educated French. I suppose no amount of coaching at a school in or near Marseilles could get the better of the southern "O," long where it should be short and clipped when it ought to be broad. But, then, the language was already in decline, owing to lax teaching standards and uncontrolled immigration. I admire your achievement and respect your handicaps, and I know Robert would say the same if he knew you were in my thoughts.

Your suitcase weighed next to nothing. I wondered if you owned warm clothes and if you even knew there could be such a thing as a wet summer. You might have seemed more at home basking in a lush garden than tramping the chilly streets in search of employment. I showed you the room—mine—with its two corner windows and long view down Avenue de Choisy. (I was to take Robert's and he was to sleep in the living room, on a couch.) At the far end of the Avenue, Asian colonization had begun: a few restaurants and stores selling rice bowls and embroidered slippers from Taiwan. (Since those days the community has spread into all the neighboring streets. Police keep out of the area, preferring to let the immigrants settle disputes in their own way. Apparently, they punish wrongdoers by throwing them off the Tolbiac Bridge. Robert has been told of a secret report, compiled by experts, which the Mayor has had on his desk for eighteen months. According to this report, by the year 2025 Asians will have taken over a third of Paris, Arabs and Africans three-quarters, and unskilled European immigrants two-fifths. Thousands of foreign-sounding names are deliberately "lost" by the authorities and never show up in telephone books or computer directories, to prevent us from knowing the true extent of their progress.)

I gave you the inventory and asked you to read it. You said you did not care what was in the room. I had to explain that the inventory was for me. Your signature, "Alda Dias de Corta," with its long loops and closed "a"s showed pride and secrecy. You promised not to damage or remove without permission a double bed, two pillows, and a bolster, a pair of blankets, a beige satin spread with hand-knotted silk fringe, a chaise longue of the same color, a wardrobe and a dozen hangers, a marble fireplace (ornamental), two sets of lined curtains and two of écru voile, a walnut bureau with four drawers, two framed etchings of cathedrals (Reims and Chartres), a bedside table, a small lamp with parchment shade, a Louis XVI-style writing desk, a folding card table and four chairs, a gilt-framed mirror, two wrought-iron wall fixtures fitted with electric candles and light bulbs shaped like flames, two medium-sized "Persian" rugs and an electric heater, which had given useful service for six years but which you aged before its time by leaving it turned on all night. Robert insisted I include breakfast. He did not want it told around the building that we were cheap. What a lot of coffee, milk, bread, apricot jam, butter, and sugar you managed to put away! Yet you remained as thin as a matchstick and that great thatch of curly hair made your face seem smaller than ever.

You agreed to pay a monthly rent of fifty thousand francs for the room, cleaning of same, use of bathroom, electricity, gas (for heating baths and morning coffee), fresh sheets and towels once a week, and free latchkey. You were to keep a list of your phone calls and to settle up once a week. I offered to take messages and say positive things about you to prospective employers. The figure on the agreement was not fifty thousand, of course, but five hundred. To this day, I count in old francs—the denominations we used before General de Gaulle decided to delete two zeros, creating confusion for generations to come. Robert has to make out my income tax; otherwise, I give myself earnings in millions. He says I've had more than thirty years now to learn how to move a decimal, but a figure like "ten thousand francs" sounds more solid to me than "one hundred." I remember when a hundred francs was just the price of a croissant.

You remarked that five hundred was a lot for only a room. You had heard of studios going for six. But you did not have six hundred francs or five or even three, and after a while I took back my room and put you in Robert's, while he continued to sleep on the couch. Then you had no francs at all, and you exchanged beds with Robert, and, as it turned out, occasionally shared one. The arrangement—having you in the living room—never worked: it was hard to get you up in the morning, and the room looked as though five people were using it, all the time. We borrowed a folding bed and set it up at the far end of the hall, behind a screen, but you found the area noisy. The neighbors who lived upstairs used to go away for the weekend, leaving their dog. The concierge took it out twice a day, but the rest of the time it whined and barked, and at night it would scratch the floor. Apparently, this went on right over your head. I loaned you the earplugs my husband had used when his nerves were so bad. You complained that with your ears stopped up you could hear your own pulse beating. Given a choice, you preferred the dog.

I remember saying, "I'm afraid you must think we French are cruel to animals, Mlle. Dias de Corta, but I assure you not everyone is the same." You protested that you were French, too. I asked if you had a French passport. You said you had never applied for one. "Not even to go and visit your family?" I asked. You replied that the whole family lived in Marseilles. "But where were they born?" I said. "Where did they come from?" There wasn't so much talk about European citizenship then. One felt free to wonder.

The couple with the dog moved away sometime in the eighties. Now the apartment is occupied by a woman with long, streaky, brass-colored hair. She wears the same coat, made of fake ocelot, year after year. Some people think the man she lives with is her son. If so, she had him at the age of twelve.

WHAT I want to tell you about has to do with the present and the great joy and astonishment we felt when we saw you in the oven-cleanser commercial last night. It came on just at the end of the eight-o'clock news and before the debate on hepatitis. Robert and Anny were having dinner with me, without the children: Anny's mother had taken them to visit Euro Disney and was keeping them overnight. We had just started dessert—crème brûlée—when I recognized your voice. Robert stopped eating and said to Anny, "It's Alda. I'm sure it's Alda." Your face has changed in some indefinable manner that has nothing to do with time. Your smile seems whiter and wider; your hair is short and has a deep-mahogany tint that mature actresses often favor. Mine is still ash-blond, swept back, medium-long. Alain—the stylist I sent you to, all those years ago—gave it shape and color, once and for all, and I have never tampered with his creation.

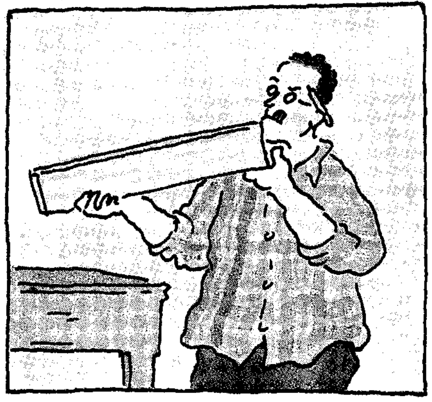
Alain often asked for news of you after you vanished, mentioning you affectionately as "the little Carmencita," searching TV guides and magazines for a sign of your career. He thought you must have changed your name, perhaps to something short and easy to remember. I recall the way you wept and stormed after he cut your hair, saying he had charged two weeks' rent and cropped it so drastically that there wasn't a part you could audition for now except Hamlet. Alain retired after selling his salon to a competent and charming woman named Marie-Laure. She is thirty-seven and trying hard to have a baby. Apparently, it is her fault, not the husband's. They have started her on hormones and I pray for her safety. It must seem strange to you to think of a woman bent on motherhood, but she has financial security with the salon (although she is still paying the bank). The husband is a car-insurance assessor.

The shot of your face at the oven door, seen as though the viewer were actually in the oven, seemed to me original and clever. (Anny said she had seen the same device in a commercial about refrigerators.) I wondered if the oven was a convenient height or if you were crouched on the floor. All we could see of you was your face, and the hand wielding the spray can. Your nails were beautifully lacquered holly-red, not a crack or chip. You assured us that the product did not leave a bad smell or seep into food or damage the ozone layer. Just as we had finished taking this in, you were replaced by a picture of bacteria, dead or dying, and the next thing we knew some man was driving you away in a Jaguar, all your household tasks behind you. Every movement of your body seemed to express freedom from care. What I could make out of your forehead, partly obscured by the mahogany-tinted locks, seemed smooth and unlined. It is only justice, for I had a happy childhood and a wonderful husband and a fine son, and I recall some of the things you told Robert about your early years. He was just twenty-two and easily moved to pity.

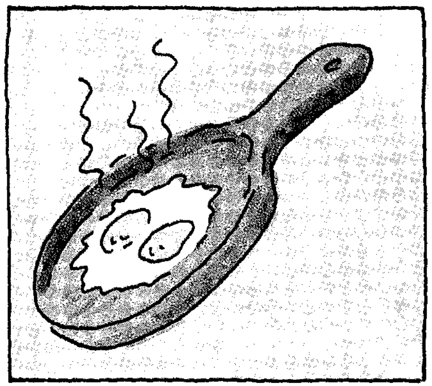
Anny reminded us of the exact date when we last had seen you: April 24, 1983. It was in the television film about the two friends, "Virginie" and "Camilla," and how they meet two interesting but very different men and accompany them on a holiday in Cannes. One of the men is a celebrated singer whose wife (not shown) has left him for some egocentric reason (not explained). The other is an architect with political connections. The singer does not know the architect has been using bribery and blackmail to obtain government contracts. Right at the beginning you make a mistake and choose the architect, having rejected the singer because of his social manner, diffident and shy. "Virginie" settles for the singer. It turns out that she has never heard of him and does not know he has sold millions of records. She has been working among the deprived in a remote mountain region, where reception is poor.

Anny found that part of the story hard to believe. As she said, even the most forlorn Alpine villages are equipped for winter tourists, and skiers won't stay in places where they can't watch the pro-

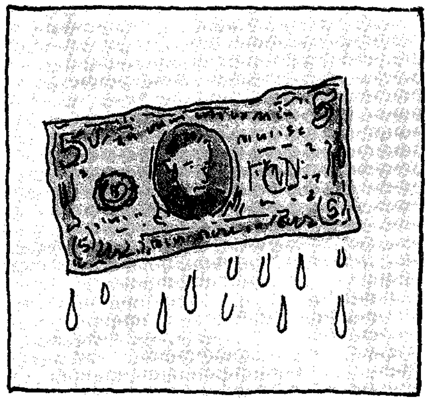
Misleading Economic Indicators



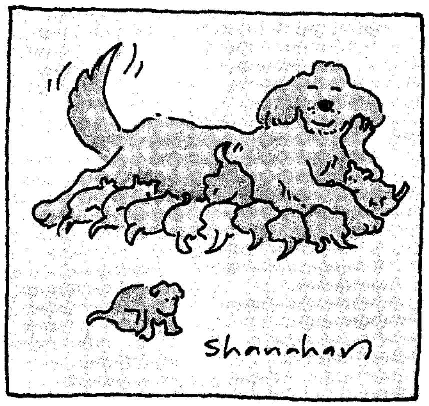
Birdhouse starts are up.



Double yolk!



Fiver found in wash.



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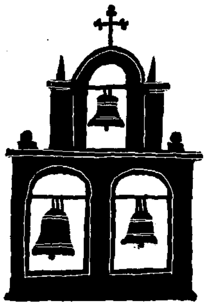
grams. At any rate, the singer is captivated by "Virginie," and the two sit in the hotel bar, which is dimly lighted, comparing their views and principles. While this is taking place, you, "Camilla," are upstairs in a flower-filled suite, making mad love with the architect. Then you and he have a big quarrel, because of his basic indifference to the real world, and you take a bunch of red roses out of a vase and throw them in his face. (I recognized your quick temper.) He brushes a torn leaf from his bare chest and picks up the telephone and says, "Madame is leaving the hotel. Send someone up for her luggage." In the next scene you are on the edge of a highway trying to get a lift to the airport. The architect has given you your air ticket but nothing for taxis.



Anny and Robert had not been married long, but she knew about you and how much you figured in our memories. She sympathized with your plight and thought it was undeserved. You had shown yourself to be objective and caring and could have been won round (by the architect) with a kind word. She wondered if you were playing your own life and if the incident at Cannes was part of a pattern of behavior. We were unable to say, inasmuch as you had vanished from our lives in the seventies. To me, you seemed not quite right for the part. You looked too quick and intelligent to be standing around with no clothes on, throwing flowers at a naked man, when you could have been putting on a designer dress and going out for dinner. Robert, who had been perfectly silent, said, "Alda was always hard to cast." It was a remark that must have come out of old café conversations, when he was still seeing actors. I had warned Anny he would be hard to live with. She took him on trust.

My husband took some people on trust, too, and he died disappointed. I once showed you the place on Place d'Italie where our restaurant used to be. After we had to sell, it became a pizza restaurant, then a health-food store. What it is now I don't know. When I go by it I look the other way. Like you, he picked the wrong person. She was a regular lunchtime customer, as quiet as Anny; her husband did the talking. He seemed to be involved with the construction taking place around the Porte de Choisy and at that end of the Avenue. The Chinese were moving into these places as fast as they were available; they kept their promises and paid their bills, and it seemed like a wise investment. Something went wrong. The woman disappeared, and the husband retired to that seaside town in Portugal where all the exiled kings and queens used to live. Portugal is a coincidence: I am not implying any connection with you or your relations or fellow-citizens.

If we are to create the Europe of the twenty-first century, we must show belief in one another and take our frustrated expectations as they come.

What I particularly admired, last night, was your pronunciation of "ozone." Where would you be if I hadn't kept after you about your "O"s? "Say *'Rhône,'* " I used to tell you. "Not *'run.'* " Watching you drive off in the Jaguar, I wondered if you had a thought to spare for Robert's old Renault. The day you went away together, after the only quarrel I ever had with my son, he threw your suitcase in the back seat. The suitcase was still there the next morning, when he came back alone. Later, he said he hadn't noticed it. The two of you had spent the night in the car, for you had no money and nowhere to go. There was barely room to sit. He drives a Citröen BX now.

I had been the first to spot your condition. You had an interview for a six-day modelling job—Rue des Rosiers, wholesale—and nothing to wear. I gave you one of my own dresses, which, of course, had to be taken in. You were thinner than ever and had lost your appetite for breakfast. You said you thought the apricot jam was making you sick. (I bought you some honey from Provence, but you threw that up, too.) I had finished basting the dress seams and was down on my knees, pinning the hem, when I suddenly put my hand flat on the front of the skirt and said, "How far along are you?" You burst into tears and said something I won't repeat. I said, "You should have thought of all that sooner. I can't help you. I'm sorry. It's against the law and, besides, I wouldn't know where to send you."

After the night in the Renault you

went to a café, so that Robert could shave in the washroom. He said, "Why don't you start a conversation with that woman at the next table? She looks as if she might know." Sure enough, when he came back a few minutes later, your attention was turned to the stranger. She wrote something on the back of an old Métro ticket (the solution, most probably) and you put it away in your purse, perhaps next to the diploma. You seemed to him eager and hopeful and excited, as if you could see a better prospect than the six-day modelling job or the solution to your immediate difficulty or even a new kind of life—better than any you could offer each other. He walked straight out to the street, without stopping to speak, and came home. He refused to say a word to me, changed his clothes, and left for the day. A day like any other, in a way.

When the commercial ended we sat in silence. Then Anny got up and began to clear away the dessert no one had finished. The debate on hepatitis was now deeply engaged. Six or seven men who seemed to be strangling in their collars and ties sat at a round table, all of them yelling. The program presenter had lost control of the proceedings. One man shouted above the others that there were people who sincerely wanted to be ill. No amount of money poured into the health services could cure their muddled impulses. Certain impulses were as bad as any disease. Anny, still standing, cut off the sound (her only impatient act), and we watched the debaters opening and shutting their mouths. Speaking quietly, she said that life was a long duty, not a gift. She often thought about her own and had come to the conclusion that only through reincarnation would she ever know what she might have been or what important projects she might have carried out. Her temperament is Swiss. When she speaks, her genes are speaking.

I ALWAYS expected you to come back for the suitcase. It is still here, high up on a shelf in the hall closet. We looked inside—not to pry but in case you had packed something perishable, such as a sandwich. There was a jumble of cotton garments and a pair of worn sandals and some other dresses I had pinned and basted for you, which you never sewed. Or sewed with such big,

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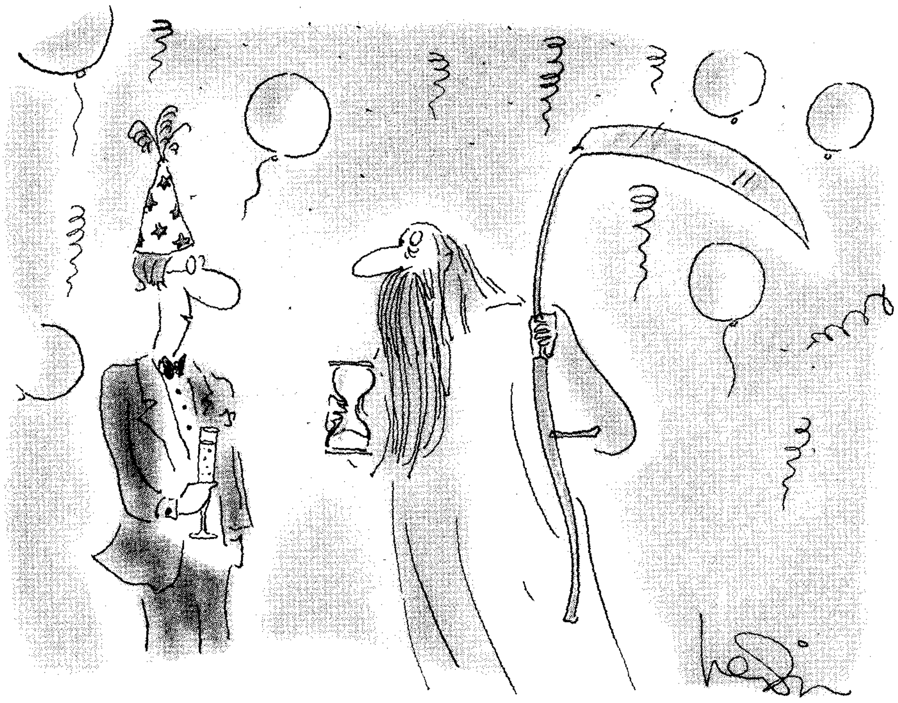

"Last time I saw you, you were just a baby."

loose stitches that the seams came apart. (I had also given you a warm jacket with an embroidered Tyrolian-style collar. I think you had it on when you left.) On that first day, when I made the remark that your suitcase weighed next to nothing, you took it for a slight and said, "I am small and I wear small sizes." You looked about fifteen and had poor teeth and terrible posture.

The money you owed came to a hundred and fifty thousand francs, counted the old way, or one thousand five hundred in new francs. If we include accumulated inflation, it should amount to a million five hundred thousand; or, as you would probably prefer to put it, fifteen thousand. Inflation ran for years at twelve per cent, but I think that over decades it must even out to ten. I base this on the fact that in 1970 half a dozen eggs were worth one new franc, while today one has to pay nine or ten. As for interest, I'm afraid it would be impossible to work out after so much time. It would depend on the year and the whims of this or that bank. There have been more prime ministers and annual budgets and unpleasant announcements and changes in rates than I can count. Actually, I don't want interest. To tell the truth, I don't want anything but the pleasure of seeing you and hearing from your own lips what you are proud of and what you regret.

My only regret is that my husband never would let me help in the restaurant. He wanted me to stay home and create a pleasant refuge for him and look after Robert. His own parents had slaved in their bistro, trying to please greedy and difficult people who couldn't be satisfied. He did not wish to have his only child do his homework in some dim corner between the bar and the kitchen door. But I could have been behind the bar, with Robert doing homework where I could keep an eye on him (instead of in his room with the door locked). I might have learned to handle cash and checks and work out tips in new francs and I might have noticed trouble coming, and taken steps.

I sang a lot when I was alone. I wasn't able to read music, but I could imitate anything I heard on records that suited my voice, airs by Delibes or Massenet. My muses were Lily Pons and Ninon Vallin. Probably you have never heard of them. They were before your time and are traditionally French.

According to Anny and Marie-Laure, fashions of the seventies are on the way back. Anny never buys herself anything, but Marie-Laure has several new outfits with softly draped skirts and jackets with a peasant motif—not unlike the clothes I gave you. If you like, I

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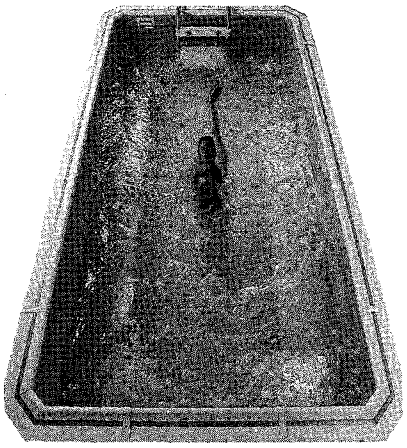

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could make over anything in the suitcase to meet your social and professional demands. We could take up life where it was broken off, when I was on my knees, pinning the hem. We could say simple things that take the sting out of life, the way Anny does. You can come and fetch the suitcase any day, at any time. I am up and dressed by half past seven, and by a quarter to nine my home is ready for unexpected guests. There is an elevator in the building now. You won't have the five flights to climb. At the entrance to the building you will find a digit-code lock. The number that lets you in is K630. Be careful not to admit anyone who looks suspicious or threatening. If some stranger tries to push past just as you open the door, ask him what he wants and the name of the tenant he wishes to see. Probably he won't even try to give you a credible answer and will be scared away.

The concierge you knew stayed on for another fifteen years, then retired to live with her married daughter in Normandy. We voted not to have her replaced. A team of cleaners comes in twice a month. They are never the same, so one never gets to know them. It does away with the need for a Christmas tip and you don't have the smell of cooking permeating the whole ground floor, but one misses the sense of security. You may remember that Mme. Julie was alert night and day, keeping track of everyone who came in and went out. There is no one now to bring mail to the door, ring the doorbell, make sure we are still alive. You will notice the row of mailboxes in the vestibule. Some of the older tenants won't put their full name on the box, just their initials. In their view, the name is no one's business. The postman knows who they are, but in summer, when a substitute makes the rounds, he just throws their letters on the floor. There are continual complaints. Not long ago, an intruder tore two or three boxes off the wall.

You will find no changes in the apartment. The inventory you once signed could still apply, if one erased the words "electric heater." Do not send a check—or, indeed, any communication. You need not call to make an appointment. I prefer to live in the expectation of hearing the elevator stop at my floor and then your ring, and of having you tell me you have come home. ♦

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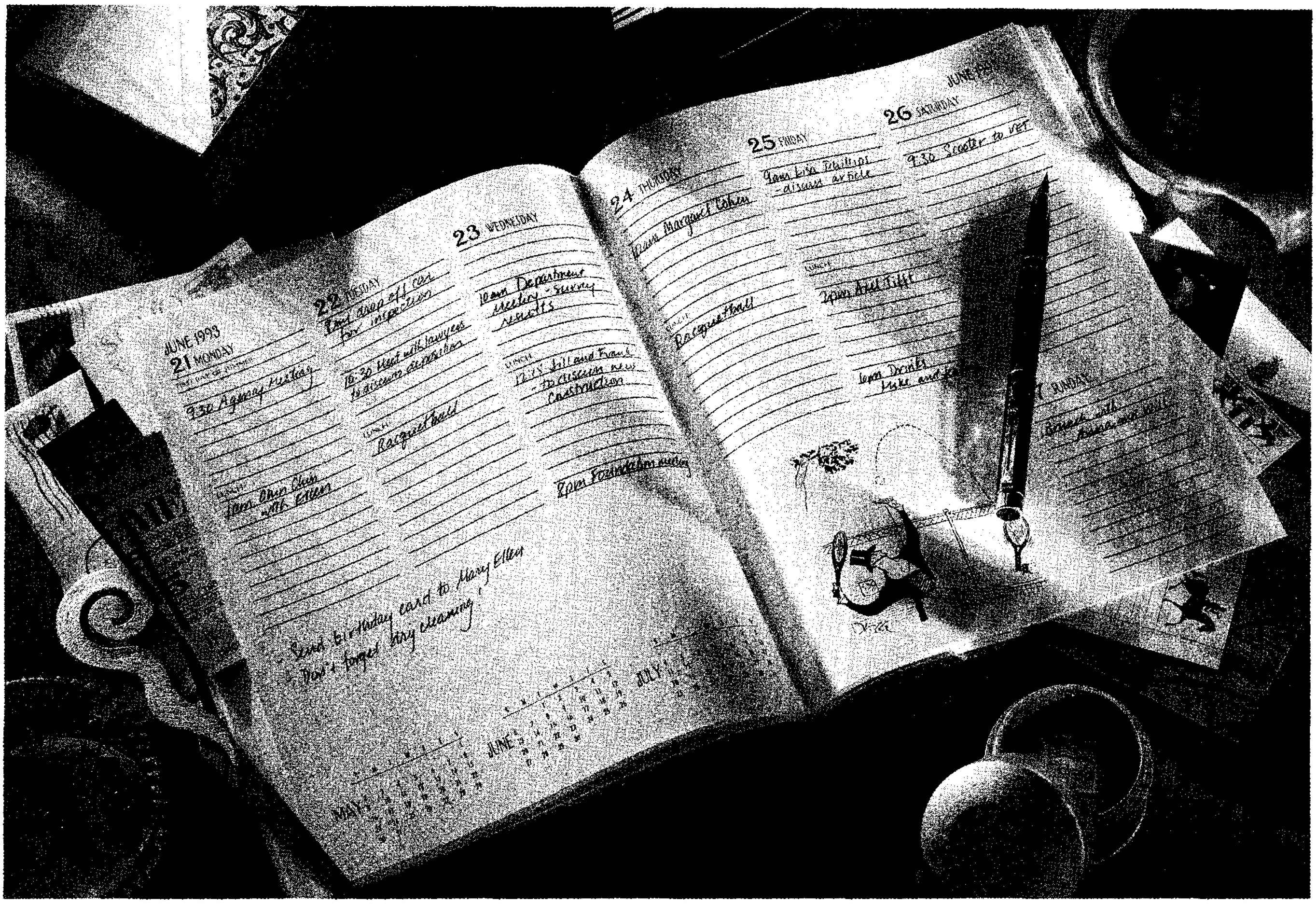

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THE CRITICS

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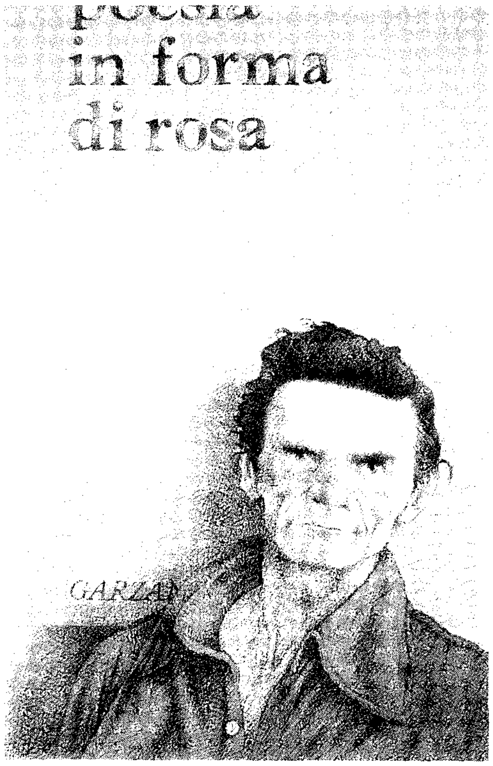
PASOLINI: A STAR ON FIRE

by Clive James

RENAISSANCE MAN is a description tossed around too lightly in modern times—actors get it if they can play the guitar—but for Pier Paolo Pasolini nothing less will do. From the moment he hit Rome after the Second World War until the moment his own car hit him in 1975, Pasolini single-handedly reëmbodied about half the personnel of Burckhardt's "The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy." He was poet, novelist, scholar, intellectual, sexual adventurer, reforming zealot, creator of large-scale visual spectaculars—and all these things equally. To make a comparable impact, Raphael would have had to be elected Pope. To make a comparable exit, Michelangelo would have had to fall out of the Sistine Ceiling. Pasolini was a front-page event in every field he entered, including death. A boy he picked up in his Alfa Romeo sports car ran him over with it and left him helpless in the dust. Beat that, Renaissance! Not even Cola di Rienzo got trampled by his own horse.

Pasolini's sensational demise happened at Ostia, once the port where Julius Caesar took ship and Cleopatra came ashore. The ancient location widens Pasolini's frame of reference still further, to include the whole of Italian history. He was such a national figure that it becomes easy to lose sight of the individual. In a new biography ("Pasolini Requiem"; Pantheon; $35) Barth David Schwartz mercifully doesn't, but his whopping book isn't helped by the bad practice of cramming in all the incidental research to prove that it has been done. European reviewers like to call this an American habit, but really it is a virus with no respect for borders. A more specific stricture to place on Mr. Schwartz might be that a prose style so devoid of verve is no fit instrument to evoke a hero who crackled with energy even when he was being stupid. But Mr. Schwartz, though a plodder, plods briskly enough to make his subject breathe, and some of the specialized knowledge was well worth going to get. In addition to his prodigious archival burrowings and the conducting of interviews on the scale of a door-to-door electoral canvass, Mr. Schwartz seems to have acquainted himself personally with the sexually ambiguous (though unambiguously violent) Roman low life that was Pasolini's stamping ground, or prancing ground. The biographer is to be congratulated not least for coming out alive. The biographee, after all, got killed in there.



La Malavita: Pasolini spent so much time in the lower depths because he found them ethically preferable to the heights.

As for what he was doing in there, the first answer is obvious: he was cruising, although that word understates his predatory celerity. Better to say that he was pouncing. Quick off the mark and dressed to kill, he was a cheetah in dark glasses. In the *borgata*, the slumland of the Roman periphery, the population was mostly immigrants from the south who had come in search of prosperity and found misery. Petty theft and casual prostitution made up most of their economy. For a well-heeled and voraciously promiscuous homosexual like Pasolini, it was a dream come true. There were boys to be had for a pack of cigarettes or just a ride in his car.

He did his best to have them all. It remains astonishing, when you look at the shelf of books and rack of films signed with his name, that he found the energy to copulate even more prolifically than he created. People who knew him well were astonished, too. On location in North Africa for a film, his colleagues would retire exhausted to their tents after a long day and meet him coming out of his, all set to cruise the dunes.

But the spontaneous and seemingly

everlasting abundance of sexual gratification was also the wellspring of his politics. The second and less obvious answer to the question of why he spent so much time in the lower depths was that he found them ethically preferable to the heights. He thought the truth was down there. Unlike other articulate, well-paid enemies of bourgeois society, Pasolini could actually point to an alternative. It wasn't a pretty alternative, but that was one of the things he hated about the bourgeoisie—its concern with mere appearances.

He hated everything else about the bourgeoisie as well, but in that respect he holds little interest except as an especially flagrant example of the modern middle-class intellectual blindly favoring, against common reason and all the historical evidence, a totalitarian substitute for the society that produced him. Valued by the P.C.I., the Communist Party of Italy, for the publicity he brought it, Pasolini was allowed more latitude than any other mouthpiece. He often spoke against Party doctrines, and used the space given him by the Party's own newspapers to do so. But he was reliable, not to say predictable, in his denunciation of capitalism, neo-capitalism, consumerism, the bourgeoisie, bourgeois consumerism, bourgeois democracy, neo-capitalist democracy, consumerist democracy, and, for that matter, democracy itself, which he thought, or said he thought, could never achieve anything more than "false tolerance" so long as it was infected by bourgeois consciousness.

It hardly needs saying that Pasolini had bourgeois origins himself: you don't get that kind of stridency except from someone in a false position. Raised under Fascism in a small town in Friuli—a province in the northeast of the country, where it bends toward Trieste—young Pier Paolo, a natural student, picked up the firm grounding in the etymology of the Friulian dialect which underpinned his lifetime achievement as a scholar and master of the Italian language. But he picked up no grounding at all in the life of the proletariat. He never did a day's manual labor, then or later.

This is a standard pattern for revolutionary intellectuals and can't usefully be called hypocrisy, since if there is such a thing as a proletarian consciousness then it is hard to see how any proletarian could escape from it without the help of the revolutionary intellectual—although just how the revolutionary intellectual manages to escape from bourgeois consciousness is a problem that better minds than Pasolini have never been able to solve without sleight of hand. On this point Pasolini never pretended to be analytical, or even consistent. He was content to be merely rhetorical, in a well-established Italian tradition by which political argument is conducted like grand opera, with the tenor, encouraged by the applause, or even by the mere absence of abuse, advancing to the footlights to sing his aria all over again, da capo and con amore.

Another aria Pasolini kept reprising was a bit harder to forgive. Mr. Schwartz could have done more to disabuse the unwary reader of the notion that Pasolini might have had something when he not only awarded himself credentials in the wartime resistance but claimed the resistance as the alma mater of the postwar revolutionary struggle. Pasolini's resistance activities were confined mainly to writing obscure scholarly articles that the censors would have had to go out of their way even to find, let alone interpret. Again, there is no dishonor in this: people were shot for less. As in France, there was an understandable tendency in Italy after the war for people who had been helpless civilians during it to award themselves battle honors retroactively. Pasolini was just another schoolboy raised under the Fascist system who had the dubious luck to become a questioning adolescent at the precise moment when Fascism fell apart, and was thus able to convince himself that he had seen through it.

A more serious piece of mental legerdemain—and one that Mr. Schwartz doesn't do half enough to point out—was Pasolini's lifelong pretense that the resistance was the prototype of the future Communist state, and for that very reason had been throttled by the ruthless forces of capitalism, bourgeois democracy, etc. Again as in France, most of the first and many of the bravest resistance fighters in Italy were indeed Communists. But the resistance movement soon became too broadly based to be called revolutionary; a better parallel is with Yugoslavia, Poland, or those other East European countries where not even opposition to the Nazis could unite the partisan movement, whose Communists regarded its bourgeois democrats as the real enemy, to be wiped out when the opportunity arose. This actually happened to Pasolini's brother, an active partisan who was liquidated by a Communist kangaroo court busily anticipating the postwar Socialist order. In most respects ready to concede that Pasolini was so cold a fish that even his passions were impersonal, Mr. Schwartz seems not to have fully grasped that Pasolini was callous about his brother, too, claiming his death as a sacrifice in a historic struggle that, since it existed only in the minds of intellectuals, was never truly historic but always, and only, literary.

It could be that Mr. Schwartz, for all he undoubtedly knows about Italy now, doesn't know quite enough about what it was like then. He is especially shaky in the crucial area of Italy's messy emergence from the war. A reference to German "Junker 25 transports" might just be a misprint for what they ought to be, Junkers 52 transports, but his apparent belief that a German bomber could be called a Macchi—famously an Italian aircraft company—undermines confidence in his knowledge of the period, especially since he is making such a parade of specific references in order to evoke it: "On April 6 [of 1944] Klaus Barbie's Gestapo in Lyons arrested fifty-one Jews . . ." etc. If this is meant to be an ironic comment on the terrible bedfellows Mussolini had acquired when he agreed to set up the Republic of Salò under German tutelage, it scarcely seems adequate. Why is there nothing about the Nazi assault on the Jews of Italy? It would not only have been more pertinent to the subject; it would have created

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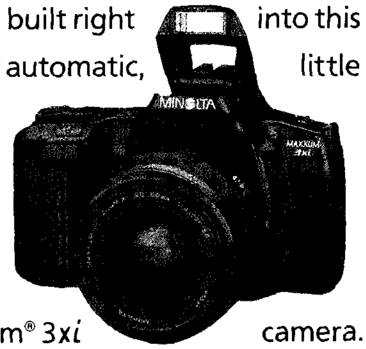

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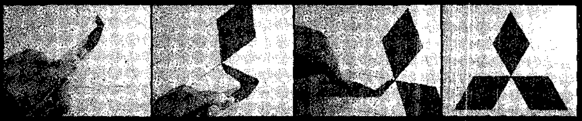

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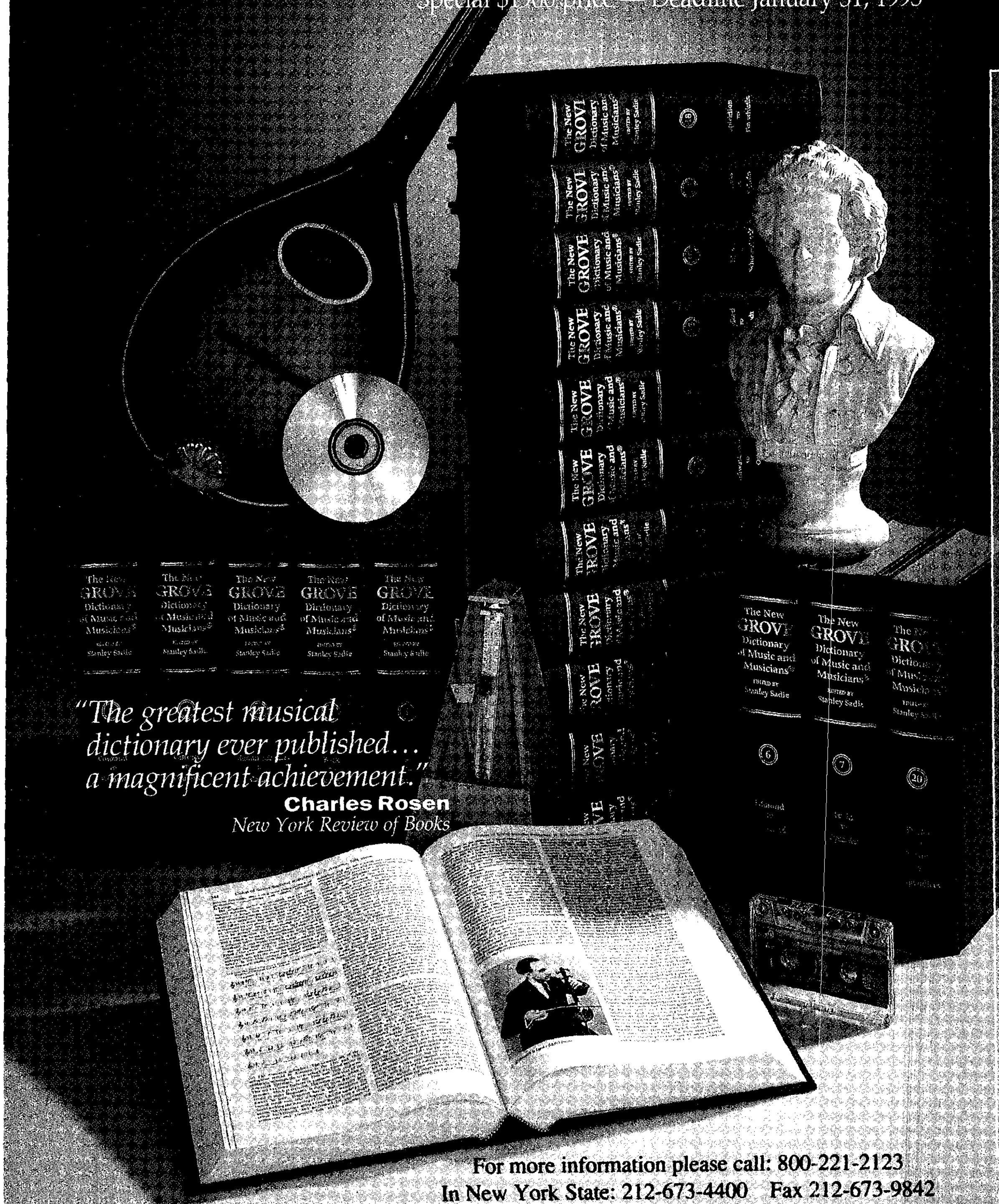

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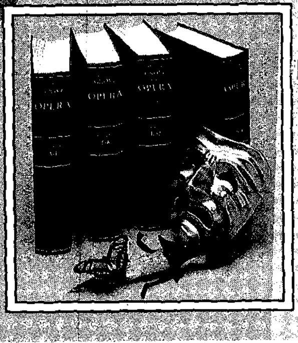

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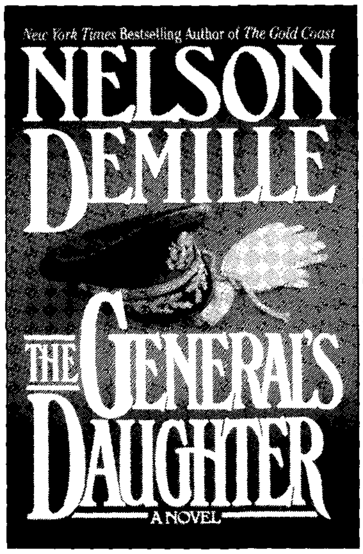
a more realistic context against which Pasolini's later vaporings about the revolutionary resistance could have been judged. That the Nazi attempt to render Italy *judenrein* was a comparative failure was due at least partly to the historic reluctance of the Italian people to follow fanatics of any stamp further than the parade ground. There were plenty of bourgeois elements, including the rank and file of the Church, who risked their lives to save Jews. Mr. Schwartz might have made more of this, especially since Pasolini himself made so little.

PASOLINI'S theatrical fantasies about a formative period of his own and his country's history were not casual. Like Sartre's quietly misleading suggestions that he had been a Resistance fighter in the thick of the action, they were fundamental to a political career of posturing histrionics. Pasolini never went as far as Sartre, although Mr. Schwartz is kind to believe his claims of having escaped from the Germans in a hail of bullets. Pasolini's story was that when the regiment into which he had been drafted was ordered by the Germans to surrender its arms he and a friend threw their rifles into a ditch "and then, in a burst of machine-gun fire, dove in after them." The story continued, "We waited for the regiment to march off, and then made our escape. It was completely an instinctive and involuntary beginning to my resistance." Thus Pasolini, quoted by the English journalist Oswald Stack in 1970, and reprinted by Mr. Schwartz without comment.

Well, it *might* have happened: German machine gunners missed, occasionally. A more plausible version is that Pasolini, like many others, managed to desert unnoticed in the confusion. Sartre let people believe that he had escaped from prison camp. In fact he had been allowed to go home. The heroism came later, in the telling of the tale. So it does for most of us. The best reason for not believing that there was any machine gunner, however, is that Pasolini said so little about the incident later on. If it had really happened there would have been essays, epic poems, movies, operas. A fabulist on Pasolini's scale could never leave unexploited a fact that had actually occurred.

Pasolini respected facts. He just didn't respect their context. You couldn't take his word about the meaning of things. But in his early days in Rome he was unbeatable at pointing out things that other people—bourgeois people—preferred to ignore. For a while, he had the only game in town. Propelled by the postwar economic recovery, Roman high life regained all its old extravagance. Out at its edge, in the *periferia*, Roman low life grew ever more malodorous, and for the same reason: the wealth that fuelled the party had drawn the poor people to the glowing window. Pasolini's mission was to remind the high life that the low life existed, to tell the *dolce vita* about the *malavita*.

He did it first as a novelist. His 1959 novel "Una Vita Violenta" has just been republished, by Pantheon, as "A Violent Life," in the 1968 translation by William Weaver, of whom it should be said that the international reputation of modern Italian literature wouldn't be the same without him. Like Max Hayward with Russian, Weaver has been vital to the job of transmitting the cultural force of an off-trail language into the world's consciousness. (It remains a terrible pity that Weaver didn't find time to translate all of Primo Levi's books instead of only a couple of them.) But not even Weaver could translate the full impact of "Una Vita Violenta," because the book depends on the shock effect of being written ugly in a beautiful language. Though Weaver's translation is rendered in the most faithfully squalid English, it is no more horrifying than "Last Exit to Brooklyn," whereas it ought to turn the mind's stomach like the invective of the damned in Dante's Hell. Pasolini went searching for boys among the rubbish dumps and came back with a picture of how they lived. His Roman *borgata* was like a Rio *favela* without the flowers. In "Black Orpheus," Marcel Camus's film about Rio, which was a worldwide art-house hit at about the same time, unquenchable poetry steams out of the garbage to meet the rising sun. In Pasolini's novel there is just the garbage, and human beings are part of it. When a flood comes, one of the characters finds it within himself to punctuate a career of theft by acting selflessly. But that is the only note of hope. The book was designed as a kick in the teeth for Pasolini's hated bourgeois enemy. It worked. His reputation as a teller of the



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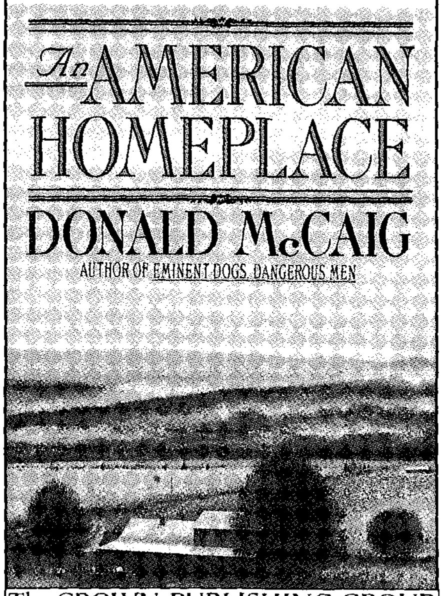

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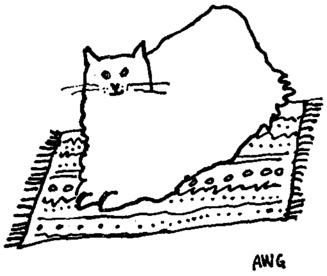
awkward truth was rapidly established, and not only among the radical intelligentsia. After all, the awkward truth was true. You didn't have to be a Marxist to spot it.

Pasolini, however, did have to be a Marxist. Though never much concerned with elaborating a coherent social analysis, he never gave up on the class war. That became part of his tragedy, because the class he championed finally realized its only ambition, which was to be absorbed by the class he attacked. But at the time he was a recognized type of radical intellectual, valued even by the nonradical because of his dazzling verbal bravura, forgiven his excesses because he was such an adornment to the scene—a word hard to avoid, considering the theatricality of Italian political discussion. Again, Mr. Schwartz might have made more of just how much forgiveness was required: "He knew nothing about Stalin's purges" is a needless concession to Pasolini's willful obtuseness. Italian Communist intellectuals knew all about Stalin. The best of them were trying to establish a brand of Communism that left him out—the hope that we later learned to call Euro-Communism, or Socialism with a Human Face. The best possible construction to put on Pasolini's polemical writings is that he was trying to do this, too. He had a promising model to follow—Gramsci, about whom Pasolini wrote the most sustained of his many remarkable poetic works, "The Ashes of Gramsci."



Later on, in the flower-power phase of the nineteen-sixties, Gramsci became a hero to thousands of young revolutionaries scattered all over the world: some of them even read a few selected pages, usually from the letters he had written in a Fascist prison. Pasolini got in early and read everything Gramsci wrote. Pasolini promised his hero's shade that the struggle would continue. What he couldn't promise was a solution to the problem posed by the fact that Communism in practice had turned out to need as much coercive apparatus as Fascism. At least part of Gramsci's undoubted charm was that he had died in jail without ever having to take part in the application of those theories he had elaborated with such humane subtlety. There was no guarantee that had he done so he would not have turned out like George Lukacs, Hungary's visionary turned cultural commissar—or, to go back to the beginning, Lunacharsky in the Soviet Union, who in 1929 was obliged to crack down on the very agitprop artists he had previously encouraged.

Gramsci's seductive vision of justice could not have been brought about without unlimited state power. Neither could Pasolini's, and with him there was even less justification for believing it could. But plenty of Pasolini's admirers knew that. They knew him to be wrong but still they marvelled. "The Ashes of Gramsci" told them that they were dealing with a prodigy. Mr. Schwartz forgets to mention one of the things that made the message clear: "Le Ceneri di Gramsci" is written in a version of terza rima, the same measure as the "Divine Comedy." Pasolini cast his wild revolutionary document in the most hallowed of strict forms as a guarantee of national continuity. There is more truth than the author seems to realize in Mr. Schwartz's solemn assurance: "At poem's end, poet and Italy are one." ("Poem's end" is an erstwhile *Time*-style construction that our author has unfortunately resurrected, employing it not quite often enough to reduce the reader to tether's end, just often enough to arouse the dreadful suspicion that a tin ear for English might be hearing Italian the same way.)

PASOLINI the writer had established himself beyond question, if not beyond criticism. Bourgeois intellectuals who knew that his politics were nonsense still knew that he was a prodigy. He had ample evidence for his theories about a bourgeois conspiracy against spontaneity and social justice: busted on a morals charge, he was hounded for his perversity by Christian Democrat politicians and their attendant newspapers. Neo-Fascists joined in with delight. But the more awkward truth, for him, was that there was such a thing as an independent, middle-of-the-road intelligentsia, which was perfectly capable of recognizing that he was a classic case in the best sense as well as the worst. He himself was no faddist when it came to critical allegiances. When the name of Roland Barthes came up, Pasolini said that although he admired Barthes's work he would give it all up for a page of Gianfranco Contini or Roberto Longhi. As a student in Bologna, Pasolini had sat at Longhi's feet when the great teacher of art history made a case for the historical continuity of inspiration beyond the reach of any ideology. As for the philologist Contini, he was Pasolini's true conscience, as he was for a greater poet, Eugenio Montale, and for almost every other prominent artist in the postwar period. In the first marvellous years of his career, Pasolini reported to Contini by letter like a truant son to the father he had never had. Contini, the least radical of men, a true cultural conservative for whom learning was the world—and who mastered more of the world's learning than any other scholar—understood the tension in Pasolini between the irreconcilable forces of social rage and creative ambition. But so did many people less qualified. Pasolini was so obviously a star, and stars are on fire.

PASOLINI loved stardom, which for a champion of the common man is always bound to present a contradiction. It can be reconciled, but it takes humor, and humor was not conspicuously among his gifts. If it had been, he might have been funnier about his need for an ever bigger stage. He preferred to believe that it was a political necessity. The movies reached people who couldn't read. While his literary reputation was still building up, Pasolini was already preparing to compromise it by contributing to the screenplays of the famous directors, which in Italy have traditionally been group efforts. In 1957, he wrote scenes for Fellini's "Le Notti di Cabiria." Fellini gave him his first car, a Fiat 600, as part payment. The tiny *macchina* can be seen as the germ of a dangerous taste, but Pasolini didn't really need much encouragement beyond the thrill of being in on the most glamorous artistic activity available. The lowlife scenes of Fellini's "La Dolce Vita" were also written by Pasolini. In that so wonderfully, so *easily* symbolic moment when Mastroianni and Anouk are shown by the prostitute across the plank in

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her flooded basement room Pasolini's harsh knowledge of the periphery underlies Fellini's humanity.

Having so resonantly played back-seat driver, Pasolini was bound to grab the wheel. "Accattone," his début movie as a director, in 1961, was the world of "Una Vita Violenta" made noisomely accessible to all, with no punches pulled, even in the casting: the bad teeth on display were the genuine article. The only star associated with the movie was Pasolini himself. The result was a triumph. Condemned out of hand by all the right people, it was a scandalous artistic success that was widely seen to spring from an even more scandalous reality. By a paradox whose consequences he would never cease trying to talk his way out of, Pasolini gained immediate and universal acceptance as the first fully authenticated multimedia genius ever to wear dark glasses indoors and a silk shirt undone to the third button. His subject matter was life beyond the margin; he himself was no more marginal than the Pope. How to reconcile this anomaly?

He couldn't, but he made a great try. If Mr. Schwartz had gone lighter on inessential detail he might have found room for a few paragraphs pointing out what a continuous thrill it was to be in or near Italy when the film directors were all living in each other's pockets, poaching each other's personnel, and turning out movies that struck you even at the time as memories to be kept, partly because the people who made them so obviously had memories of their own. The glaring difference between the Italian cinema and the French New Wave was that the Italians hadn't sent boys to do a man's work. Quite apart from the international big guns like Fellini and Visconti and Antonioni, there was a whole row of domestic household names who could get the tragic recent history of their country even into their comedies. Anyone who wanted to know what really happened to young Italian deserters who ran away from German machine guns could have found out from Comencini's "Tutti a Casa," a comic vehicle for Alberto Sordi which nevertheless brought out the full tragedy of the collapsing Fascist farce. Most of these directors were social democrats—moderates, if you like, or bourgeois liberals, if you insist—but they could produce a socially responsible cinema, and there was at least one Marxist, Gillo Pontecorvo, who left Pasolini's Marxism looking like the caprice it was. Pontecorvo's "The Battle of Algiers" was a political film in the way Pasolini's films never were.

But everyone at the time knew that Pasolini's role was to remain unpredictable by refusing to mature. He carried a license to shoot his mouth off out of season, forever making statements because he could never make sense. Italian cinema had room for just one Godard-style head case, and Pasolini was it. The special exemption he held in the literary world also applied, on a larger scale, in the more spectacular world of the movies. Almost every film he made was indicted, sequestered, banned from the festival, reinstated, fought over, laughed at—above all, talked about. If he hadn't scandalized them, people would have been disappointed.

He was a spoiled child given a camera for his birthday, who made home movies about what had spoiled him. "Oedipus Rex" was an obvious love poem to his mother, played by Silvana Mangano at her most iconically beautiful, with Pasolini's alter ego Franco Citti in the title role. Starring in "Medea," Maria Callas was his mother all over again: statuesque, mad about Jason, ready to kill anyone for him, including her own sons. In "Teorema," Terence Stamp played Pasolini himself, the sexually omnipotent stranger who penetrated the bourgeois household and everyone in it, as if the plot of Jerome K. Jerome's play "The Passing of the Third-Floor Back" had been given a monkey-gland injection. Stamp, looking more beautiful than Mangano and Callas put together, was almost credible as the avatar before whom the whole household lined up seriatim to be ravished and transfigured. An earlier choice for the role, Lee van Cleef, might have made disbelief harder to suspend. The early choices for the role of Jesus Christ in "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" were similarly unpromising. Jack Kerouac was one, Allen Ginsberg was another, and there was even a dizzy moment when Yevtushenko was considered. But Pasolini saw sense, cast a strikingly good-looking unknown, and made his best film, the one that shocked even the Marxists. It took the Gospel straight. Under the influence of Pope John XXIII, the Curia had decided that the occasional venture into the mass media need not be ruled out. The Franciscans put up the money for the movie on the sole condition that Pasolini's script stuck to the book. Pasolini might have done so anyway. Matthew's Christ comes with a sword. It was the way Pasolini saw himself: the man from nowhere, speaking authentic speech, potent beyond containment, loving the poor, transfiguring them by his touch. Authenticity was aided by the contractual and temporal impossibility of Christ's castigating the bourgeoisie, consumerism, American-style false tolerance, etc. All He was allowed to do was cleanse the temple, which will always need cleansing. As a Biblical film, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" has no peers and only one plausible emulator I can think of—Bruce Beresford's 1985 "King David." That film, much derided even by Beresford himself, has something of the same startling, self-contained feeling of being there where it all began, away from here where it all ends. Recast and given the budget to finish the big scenes that were cut short when bad weather chewed up its shooting time, "King David" might have come even closer to the Pasolini film Beresford so admired when it came out, in 1964. But Hollywood was a bad place for Beresford to start from. To that extent Pasolini was right about American consumerism. He was just wrong about the Italian bourgeoisie, from which came the independent producers who backed his movies not just because they hoped to make money—always a gamble with a director out to get banned if he could—but because they respected his gift. The Franciscans respected it, too. Modern Italian society was more complex and fruitful than Pasolini ever allowed. He wasn't sufficiently impressed by how it had given rise to him. He was too busy being impressed with himself.

It did him in, in the end. History caught up with him in the late nineteen-sixties, when the student rebellion outflanked him. His reaction to the student revolutionaries was the same as de Gaulle's. *Vi odio cari studenti*: I hate you, darling students. Pasolini cheered the police for hitting them. At least the police were poor, whereas the students were *figli di papà*, sons of daddy—in a word, bourgeois.

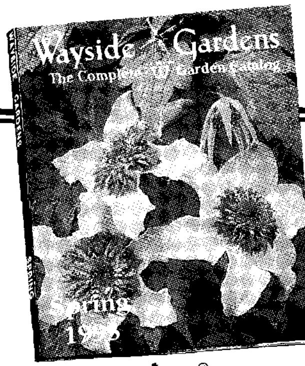
But by then it was becoming evident even to Pasolini that the class war was over and the bourgeoisie had won it. Belief in the socialist state was draining away in the West because it was already dead in the East. The only course left was to clean up democracy. Pasolini didn't take defeat gracefully. Using the regular front-page platform given him by the country's leading newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera*, he railed against every aspect of the new reforming spirit. He condemned abortion, divorce, even gay rights. He could have been preaching from the Reverend Criswell's pulpit in Dallas, except that he still considered himself the true left. All this new stuff was just "the American type of modernist tolerance." The bourgeoisie was just boxing clever.

This was foolish, but there was worse to come. He condemned the poor, too. They had failed him, the way the Germans failed Hitler. Like many social commentators who love people by the class, Pasolini had never been much good at loving them one by one: apart from his sainted mother, he froze out everybody in the end—he was the authentic Brechtian iceman. But in the last phase he did the same thing even to his collective paragon, the poor people of the *borgata*. His undoubted passion for their way of life had always been riven by a contradiction. He thought they were authentic, speaking a tongue unspoiled by suave hypocrisy, honest in their animal lust. If all this had been true it would have been a good case for keeping them poor. But he also said that the slums they lived in were capitalism self-condemned, "truly and really concentration camps." (Pasolini also habitually trivialized the word "genocide," thereby pioneering the unfortunate current practice of squandering the language appropriate to an absolute evil on a relative one.)

The tension between these two attitudes was fruitful for him as long as they could be held in balance. When it became evident, however, that the only wish of the poor was to join the consumers he despised, Pasolini could find no recourse except to enroll them among his enemies. In his three, increasingly dreadful last movies, his ideal pre-bourgeois world of freely available sex is successively discovered in Boccaccio, Chaucer, and de Sade. The trilogy makes painful viewing. Escapism is too dignified a word. Pasolini was fleeing into a past that never existed from a present he couldn't face. In a notorious front-page piece for the *Corriere* he dismissed his once-beloved Roman subproletariat as having succumbed to "a degeneration of bodies and sex organs." Pasolini even had the gall to suggest that education was ruining them. For the admirer of Gramsci it was a sad betrayal. Gramsci had always been delighted by any evidence of his proletarians' improving themselves. Pasolini wanted them to stay the way they were. When they showed signs of independent life, he lost interest in them.

Perhaps too kindly, Mr. Schwartz doesn't make much of the possibility that they were losing interest in him. One of the most famous men in the country, recognizable at a glance, he still drove by night into the territory of the Violent Life. But time was ticking by. Once, the car and the clothes would have been enough. Now he needed his fame. What next? Charlus with his rouged cheeks? Aschenbach with his rinse? Rage, rage against the dyeing of the hair. Luckily, Pasolini never had to face the sad, slow twilight of the predator gone weak in the hams. He died the way he had lived, dramatically.

He had always thought that life was like that: drama. It was the belief that made him the kind of Communist who sounds like a Fascist. His politics were an insult to his intelligence. The Italians are cursed with a language so seductive it can gloss over anything; Pasolini could always make it reveal more than it concealed, even when he talked tripe. He cut through the mellifluous uproar to speak the unspeakable. Pasolini's matchless ability to be irritating in every way meant that he was also irritating in the ways that count. Beneath Pasolini's politics lay his perceptions, and some of those remain permanently true. Free societies feel free to waste human lives, pushing them to the edge and calling them part of the landscape. The better we are at telling ourselves that this is inevitable, the more we still need telling that it won't do. ♦



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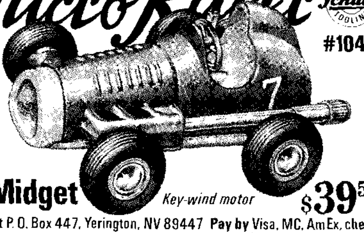

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THE THEATRE

ASTONISHMENTS AND PRATFALLS

by John Lahr

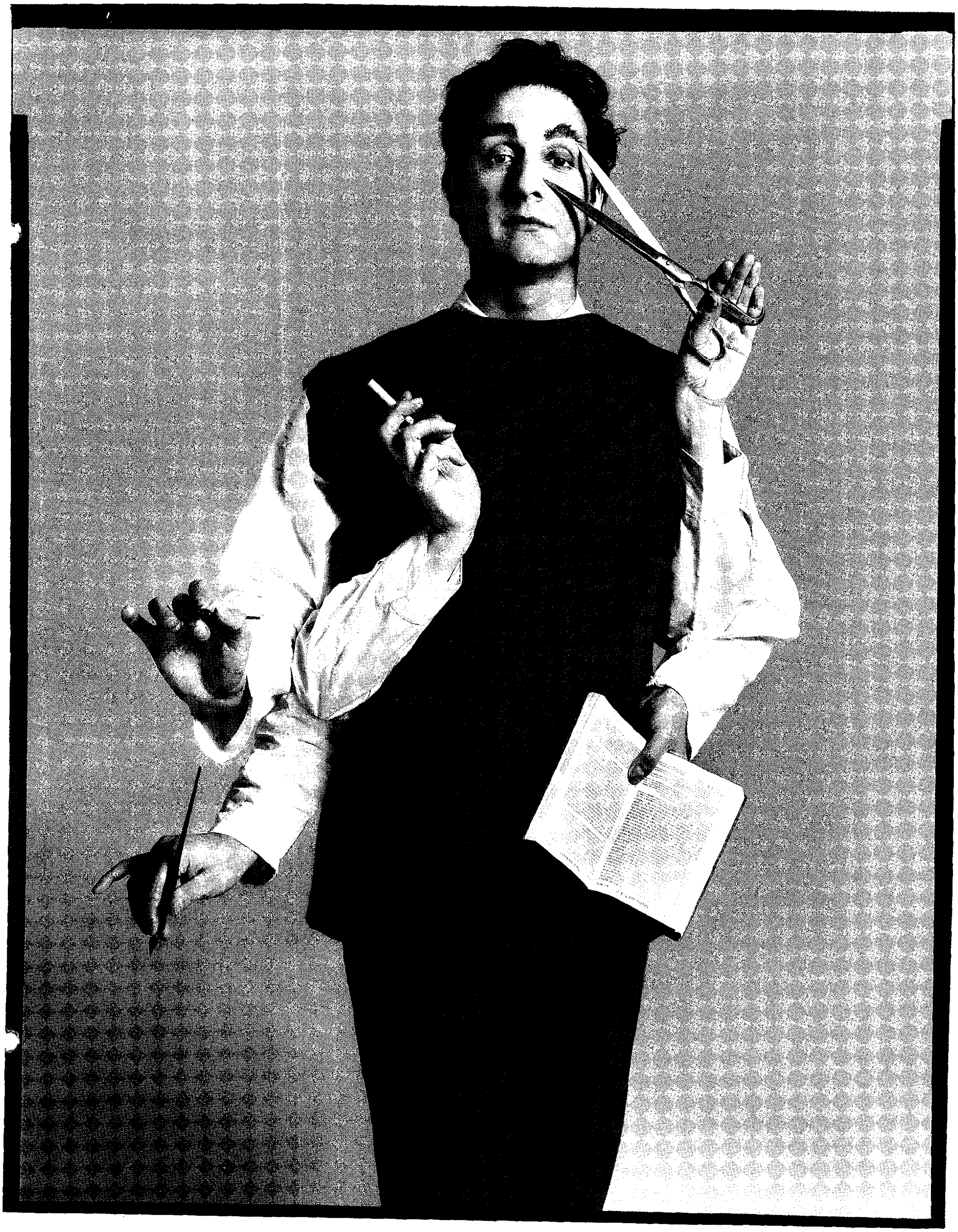
ROBERT LEPAGE'S "Needles and Opium" was in residence at the Brooklyn Academy of Music on the night of the biggest storm in the New York area in forty-two years. Lepage was about the only person on the Eastern Seaboard who was airborne. There he was, the writer, designer, and director of this one-man show (which has played to acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic), suspended on wires in front of a star-speckled Lycra screen. With a maroon notebook in one hand and a pen in the other, Lepage was conjuring up Jean Cocteau writing his "Letter to the Americans" on a New York-to-Paris flight in 1949 and contemplating "this attraction exercised by enigmas and this horror of enigmas [which] are the big problems of the American spirit." Lepage, like Cocteau, is an entrepreneur of astonishments who believes that "theatricality is something that has been stolen from theatre, and we have to take it back." His fantasia—which uses trompe-l'oeil, documentary and doctored film footage, shadow play, voice-over, dialogue, and evocatively lit tableaux in an elegy to lost love—achieves a surreal scenic playfulness that matches Cocteau's.

Cocteau likened himself to a gymnast: "I have trained my soul to have the grace and form of an acrobat." Lepage, a thirty-five-year-old Canadian, turns himself into an athlete of invention, and transforms the stage into a playground. Sometimes backflipping on the wires to exit gracefully from a scene as a new image comes up on the screen, and at other times spinning wildly in space while projections of skyscraper windows scroll up behind him to create the illusion of free-fall, Lepage traces a weird geometry, like some animated hieroglyph. He has his apotheosis when he enacts Cocteau's famous photographic illusion for *Life*, in which a bevy of arms variously play with scissors, pen, cigarette, and book. Lepage's daring sleights of hand have made him one of the most sought-after directors in the world. (He returns to BAM in February to direct "Bluebeard's Castle" and "Erwartung" for the Canadian Opera Company.) He's been a busy fellow. Having become the first North American to direct Shakespeare at the Royal National Theatre, he will be doing "Macbeth" and "The Tempest" at Tokyo's Globe Theatre, Strindberg's "A Dream Play" at Ingmar Bergman's Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, in Stockholm, and later in the new year is to begin filming his screenplay of the sequel to his six-hour stage masterpiece, "The Dragons' Trilogy," which he wrote and directed. So flying seems an apt metaphor both for the momentum of his career and for his liberation from the dead weight of convention, which the avant-garde occupationally tries to stage-manage. On the same Brooklyn stage twenty years ago, the Living Theatre was promising to engineer a levitation, but Lepage's "flying" actually returned to theatre some of its mystery and its expressive possibilities.

"Theatre is a very vertical thing—it puts us in contact with the gods, with the mind, with higher considerations," Lepage told me when he dropped in, without benefit of wires, to these offices a few days before his opening, sporting an authentic black leather jacket and a possibly inauthentic head of layered raspberry-blond hair. "I believe in building new worlds on the ruins of old ones. We're living in a society where theatre has learned to become horizontal, like cinema. People have a film education when they come to theatre. They're able to understand things in many ways that theatre doesn't profit from. Theatre doesn't try to use the capacity of an audience to read things in fast-forward, jump cuts. You have to take this into consideration if you want to tell stories to people. People have a new language, and it's not all linear."

In the first beat of "Needles and Opium," Lepage acknowledges and laughs away the metaphysical shellac of French literary culture by flashing an image of acupuncture pressure points and declaring in a voice-over, "I'm sure of at least three things acupuncture can't heal: low self-esteem, existential angst, and lovesickness." With great narrative panache, Lepage follows the trajectory of his own lovelorn torment and merges it with the story lines of Cocteau and another of his heroes, Miles Davis. The parallels appeal to Lepage's powerful sense of design and of coincidence. At approximately the same time in 1949, Cocteau and Davis were going in opposite directions across the Atlantic, between the same cities, and were high on derivatives of the same drug. (Cocteau preferred opium; Davis was on heroin.) Both were haunted by lost lovers—Cocteau mourning the death of the novelist Raymond Radiguet, Davis pining for Juliette Greco, whom he'd met in Paris. For both men, their first encounters with an alien culture profoundly affected their art. These similarities inform but do not rule the dreamlike surface of the play, which Lepage began in September, 1991, with the vague notion of writing something about Cocteau, and finished a month later. "Picasso once said, 'An artist has to discover something. And then he goes looking for it,' " remarked Lepage, who is currently circling around the subject of Hiroshima through the stories of two Shakespearean scholars he met there. "That's what we should be doing. We give a lot of credit to theatre writers who know exactly what they're going to be writing about. Does that make them more intelligent? More lucid? I think intuition is diminished by that. I didn't know what 'Needles and Opium' would be. You dig and dig, and you see that things aren't just coincidental. You realize you're writing a show about night and day, black and white, devils and angels." In all its poetic resonances, "Needles and Opium" is a cool, ingenious, surprisingly accessible exercise in the marvellous.

"Cool" is a word that Lepage projects onto the Lycra screen, and from its letters he creates the mouthpiece and other parts of Davis's trumpet in a shadow play that allows Davis to be incarnated from behind the screen in outline without Lepage's ever having to impersonate him. "Coolness" is also part of Lepage's performing aesthetic. "A certain humility," he explained to me. "The quality of



Robert Lepage as Jean Cocteau, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, December 11, 1992.

refraining from things. But that doesn't mean you're hiding them—just retaining something very strong that you don't present very often. That to me is the definition of cool. Coldness is an emotion as well as hotness. People always say that coldness is lack of emotion, but coldness is actually a very difficult thing to perform. Emotion is not something that belongs to the actors; it belongs to the audience. You have to put that emotion up there somewhere. Often you go to the theatre and see great performers. They're acting, and the emotion is theirs. You don't feel anything. Who cares if an actor's cold if he gets the words out and gets them right, if he has timing and taste?" Lepage takes issue with the traditional acting-school method of building a character up from inside out. "I think it's a crime to think acting is *only* that," he said. "You could actually get to the emotion by starting with the exterior and slowly going inward. Nowadays, sensation has to be blown out on the wall to show you have passion. But there is more nuance, more pastel emotions, which we've been kept from expressing all these years."

Lepage's stage pictures sell the sizzle but keep him dramatically still and contained onstage. "For me theatre is the art of the ceremony," he says. "The idea of a ceremony is to make people commune. It's not the same thing as trying to get an idea across. It's not a communication. You can phone somebody if you want to get an idea across, right?"

As "Robert," his stage alter ego, Lepage languishes forlornly in a Paris hotel and takes a Polaroid picture of himself; subsequently, that projected face mutates before our eyes, becoming a barometer of Lepage's grieving soul in the process of dwindling to one last image, as red-raw as a Soutine rendering of butchered meat. When Lepage finally tears up his lover's telephone number, his living hell is powerfully created by underlighting that turns his face and body a glowing red. But Lepage also has a delicate, antic touch. The love story of Davis and Greco is told entirely by means of objects fluidly crosscut on the screen: a soup bowl, into which Davis's sunglasses drop; wineglasses; a cigarette; a map of Paris; a key that slides across the map. The Lycra screen allows Lepage to create that miraculous "rice-paper wall" which, according to Cocteau in the program note, signifies the threshold of the imagination that New Yorkers were on the verge of piercing, and which for Lepage is emblematic of "the fragile extendable wall between life and death, up and down, grace and gravity." Lepage deploys the fabric in ways that sensually underscore the sexy impressionist quality of Davis's music, and at one point he even steps into the resilient Lycra to give the illusion, as Cocteau did in his films, of walking through walls.

At Lincoln Center, they're walking *into* walls. On the evidence of Wendy Wasserstein's highly praised folderol at the Mitzi Newhouse and a musical version of the film "My Favorite Year," at the Vivian Beaumont, the new artistic director, André Bishop, seems determined to go backward into the future. Wasserstein's "The Sisters Rosensweig," whose coup de theatre is Madeline Kahn donning a Chanel suit, is essentially a TV sitcom with expert performances, and "My Favorite Year" is just out-and-out TV circa 1954. The show follows a stripling gag writer for a big-time comedy variety show as he tries to shepherd a drunken, aging movie idol through a few days before showtime. It's theatrical terrain whose hubbub has, unluckily, been recently re-created in Billy Crystal's "Mr. Saturday Night." The musical is as spectacular as a Broadway audience could wish, but the most astonishing spectacle is the sight of the producers throwing good money after bad plot. For character to be seen, it must be *revealed*, and this requires antagonists. It's an idea that doesn't seem to have dawned on the director, Ron Lagomarsino, or on Joseph Dougherty, who wrote the ungainly book, which provides no conflict and virtually no second act. The show sinks under the weight of its gooey, relentless geniality. Tim Curry, who plays the sodden film star, wanders through without a proper opening number and with no dramatic situations to add complexity to his indubitable charm and technique. The nimble, wisecracking Andrea Martin, as Alice, a gag writer who not only feeds the monster but plays second banana to him, stops the show with her scintillating vaudeville shtick in "Professional Showbizness Comedy," but there isn't much of a show to stop. The songwriting team of Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens have only a couple of good dramatic notions for songs, both of them comic. When Alice tries to teach the earnest secretary K.C. (Lannyl Stephens) how to tell a joke, the musical shows off the kind of shrewd theatrical intelligence that otherwise it rarely delivers.

K.C.: I want to be funny
I want to be zany
I'd settle for anything other than buttoned-up boring and brainy
Here stands Miss Calm, efficient and prim
Who wants to be funny
Like him
If I could do prankfalls
Alice: Pratfalls
K.C.: Don't try to confuse me!
I need to know how to reply when a humorous guy
Tries to "smooze" me
Alice: Schmooze you.
(K.C. reacts)
S'cuse me!

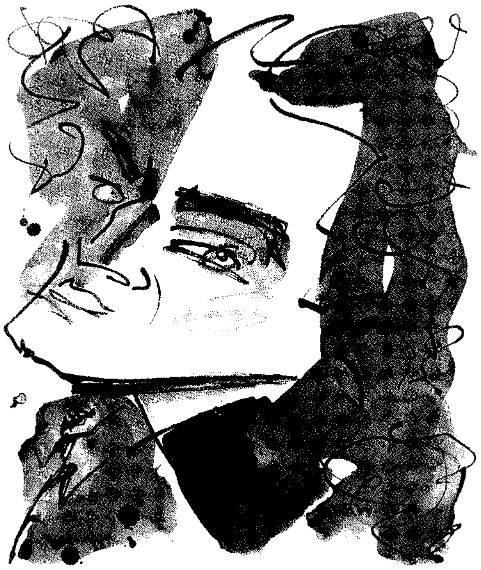
K.C. may not know what a pratfall is, but Lincoln Center now does. It has fallen on its backside in a big way. Low comics have always bounced back from those falls, and I hope the high rollers at Lincoln Center will do the same. Some institutional stocktaking is definitely in order. A subsidized theatre like Lincoln Center should be leading the community away from the mediocrity of commercial Broadway fare, not proudly serving up gruel and calling it hot delicatessen. ♦

DANCING

AN AMERICAN RITUAL

by Arlene Croce

DANCE is the recyclable art—the best things come in old packages. A new version of "The Nutcracker," a survey of stock movie genres, a major revival of a Balanchine classic that is itself a restatement of the past—all are tributes to the ongoing process of rehabilitation on which the life of the art depends. It happens that the gifts under the dance lover's tree this season were placed there by companies and choreographers none of whom were working in New York, the city that only a few years ago could claim to be the dance capital of the world. But that, too, is part of the story of dance. If Paris was the capital of the nineteenth century, it did not remain so for long as far as dance was concerned. The spotlight shifted to St. Petersburg, and from there, once the new century had dawned, back to Paris. Dance capitals live and die. New York's reign lasted through most of the twentieth century. Now, as the nineties dwindle, only one thing is certain: dance is still preëminently an American art form.



Mark Morris's "The Hard Nut": Anti-magic but not anti-romance.

But why should "The Nutcracker" (out of Petersburg's Tchaikovsky by Paris's Petipa) have become an annual American ritual? The libretto comes from a story by one of the most unusual figures of German Romanticism, a cranky genius named E. T. A. Hoffmann. Hoffmann influenced Baudelaire, Gogol, Dostoyevski, Poe, Hans Christian Andersen, Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, and, indirectly, Sigmund Freud. His nightmares—or daymares, to be precise—have decomposed into the agitations of pop psychiatry, horror films, and comic strips. There's something profoundly just about Mark Morris and the cartoonist Charles Burns collaborating to translate the quaint Europeanness of the 1892 ballet into their own suburban-sixties vision of the land that adopted classical ballet for its own. They've caught Hoffmann's drift and married it to the black undercurrent in pop Americana. Theirs is the spirit of Christmas malls, of violent kiddie cartoons, of teen love, of sexual sensation freely distributed as a human right. Their Act I party scene is a spectacle of free-falling hormones. (When their pubescent heroine bandages her wounded Nutcracker, she holds it between her thighs.) Vladimir Nabokov, another of Hoffmann's descendants, would recognize the truth of it all, and would recognize, too, the underlying charity with which the facts are presented. Morris and Burns are unflinching, but they are not out to incriminate a culture to which they themselves are indebted. Like Nabokov, they surrender to "the exuberance of philistine vulgarity."

The production, which comes to the Brooklyn Academy from Brussels and is called "The Hard Nut," squares itself with Hoffmann, but what about Tchaikovsky, and what about Petipa, from whom Tchaikovsky took his cues? Although this isn't "The Nutcracker" but a ballet about "The Nutcracker," it is technically more successful than most "Nutcracker" productions are. It sustains

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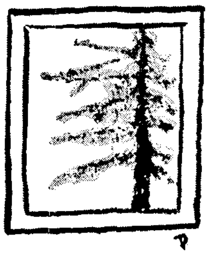
a high interest throughout its two acts, even in the purposely dull passages of the party scene, even in the suite of national dances that were intended to be nothing more than a diversion. These national dances are integrated by Morris into the story of the Hard Nut, which was the part of Hoffmann's tale that Petipa dropped. The extra material keeps the story of the Nutcracker and his identity going deep into Act II. The only trouble with it is that the Hard Nut story is unbelievably complicated, and though Morris's mime reconstruction of it is ingenious and hilarious, you have to see more than one performance to get it all. That's not a bad idea, but the congestion of facts makes the ballet a brainier and less sensuous experience than the real "Nutcracker." And a much less intensely emotional one.



Considering the unorthodox purposes to which his music is put, Tchaikovsky is well served. Every note of the score is included; the Brooklyn Philharmonic plays thrillingly under Donald York; the vocal passages in Snowflakes are sung by a live chorus. Morris's phrasing of the cross-rhythms in this waltz is one of the highlights of a beautifully choreographed show. The narrative impetus always comes from the music, and no matter how calculated his treatment of the dances (he digs his thumb into the Grossvater and pulls out a frug), Morris is never callous or unmusical. One only wishes the composer had left some extra pages of mouse music (for the Rat Queen) and fewer of the "colossal effects" that Petipa called for in the grand pas de deux. When the story finally ends and the music soars in celebration, Morris seems to run away from it.

Morris means for "The Hard Nut" to be anti-magic but not anti-romance. The transformations—of the Nutcracker into the nephew, of the Stahlbaum living room into the battleground of the mice and the G.I. Joe Soldiers—are carried out with curt efficiency by stagehands in full view of the audience. For magic we have the Balanchine production. What Morris wants is as much theatrical excitement as he can get out of "The Nutcracker" and its incorporation into American culture. He wants to show the "romance" of America, in all its media tawdriness, discovering ballet. "The Hard Nut" was inspired by media and by classical ballet in the way that Paul Taylor's version of "Le Sacre du Printemps" was inspired by silent films, pulp fiction, and Nijinskyana. The sources of Taylor's stylizations are remote from us in time. But "The Hard Nut" only pretends to be taking us back to the sixties. In fact, its period is the nineties; it's part of that same fantasy of the sixties which we see going on all around us, from clothing styles to the canonization of Andy Warhol to the election of a Kennedyesque President. "The Hard Nut" may not be as elegantly resolved in all its aspects as Taylor's "Sacre," but it's a more incendiary piece of work. For an American audience, it's closer to home.

The curtain goes up on kids watching television, and Burns's whole visual reconception of the ballet (cleverly rendered in black-and-white by Adrianne Lobel) follows from that. Children in an era of mass communications have high art delivered to them through film or video, and most of it can't compete with the rest of what's on the tube. Ballet in particular is hard to digest in canned form. As Burns himself said of "The Nutcracker," "It was basically something I'd see at Christmastime when I'd flip the channels and quickly go on." (I don't think "The Hard Nut" as produced by PBS's "Dance in America" fared much better, even though it is a very good film of its kind.) Perhaps because of its preoccupation with the underside of American life, "The Hard Nut" doesn't pay enough attention to the way "The Nutcracker" has been absorbed by our official culture—by the hundreds of thousands of children in ballet classes. I wish there had been some way to show that the horrible American Stahlbaums give their children ballet lessons; isn't this by now the birthright of every middle-class American girl—or boy (depending on the degree of political correctness)? I wish that the Marie of this production could dance on point. She really ought to, because Morris makes as big a thing of pointwork as Burns does of TV. To Morris, pointwork symbolizes Ballet, Petipa, the grand manner, the spirit of "The Nutcracker" itself. He gave his company of modern dancers the option of working on point or off; those who chose to suffer—and they were men as well as women—were coached by Peter Anastos, ballet master to the uncertain. Morris shows off the results in the Snowflakes Waltz and in several of the dances of Act II. But it's not enough. Before "The Nutcracker" became a fixture of the American Christmas, Drosselmeier's gift of a funny-looking nutcracker doll to a little girl seemed comprehensible only because Drosselmeier was an eccentric. Now almost any party guest might pick up a nutcracker at the Christmas Shop and present it to the little ballet dancer of the family.

The assimilation of "The Nutcracker" is a theme worthy of the ballet's centenary. Mark Morris thinks of a hundred different ways to carry it out, from the characterization of Drosselmeier (Rob Besserer plays him as a gangling Gary Cooper type in love with computerized gadgets) right down to the Disneyish Waltz of the Flowers. His staging of the pas de deux, with the lovers supported by the entire cast, is a grand summation of the theme. But in the principals' two solo variations Morris appears to be trying to squeeze meaning from a story that has gone dry, and in the waltz finale he has almost nothing to say choreographically. It's clear that this music is beyond the technical means of his dancers; why, then, use every note? (Balanchine didn't.) "The Hard Nut" is unquestionably a success as it stands. But it could use more Petipa. Morris needs only to follow the inner logic of his theme to turn a success into a masterpiece.

LOCAL premières by Peter Anastos aren't seen very often these days, and "The Silver Screen," one of the rare instances of a new piece done on an American company, isn't the summit of Anastos's art. But to the repertory of the floundering American Ballroom Theatre it came as a lifesaver. Anastos made these once vervy dancers look personable and beautiful and, above all, musical, and he rescued the audience at the Joyce from despair after nearly sixty minutes of Charlestons, cha-chas, Viennese waltzes, and tumid tangos—all numbingly misconceived and overfortified with raillery and foolery. I liked American Ballroom Theatre better when it was straight exhibition dancing. Now that it's gone theatrical, it has lost its ear—it doesn't seem to know where the upbeat is—and it seems to have lost its mind, too. Its idea of upbeat is attitudinal; it's Lawrence Welkerie. And what other company opens a program—*opens*, mind you—with the Sinatra recording of "September in the Rain," in which he rhymes "rain" with "pain"?

"The Silver Screen," set to "music of Hollywood, 1930-1950," proves that no genre is so familiar that it can't be refreshed by injections of the same joy juice that made it a genre in the first place. Even the framing device is generic—the one about the script girl who gets to be a star. There is a fiendish innocence in Anastos's view of these standard routines: we are as genuinely amused by the sappy newlyweds, the perky cowhands, and the dear operetta dimwits as we are gratified by their demolition. "The Silver Screen" is really about rhythm and entertainment, or rhythm *in* entertainment. When Anastos mistimes his parodies, they seem overlong or just *too* standard. When his timing is on, we get inspirations like "Appleblossom Springtime," in which four Jeanette MacDonalds meet one gorilla. The best sequence is the grand finale, which begins with some bustling to the "All About Eve" main-title music, and ends with an extended set of pairs dances to "Limehouse Blues." This was Hollywood, and this is what ballroom dancing, properly theatricalized, can still be: fun.

GEORGE BALANCHINE'S three-part "Jewels," often billed as the world's first full-length "abstract" ballet, was a hit from the moment of its première, in 1967—a fact that may prevent us from seeing that it is actually one of his most delicate creations, so intricately engineered that it easily crumbles in performance. Balanchine himself had to shore up "Emeralds" when he lost his two first-cast ballerinas, Violette Verdy and Mimi Paul, but "Emeralds" over the years has proved to be only slightly more fragile than "Rubies" and "Diamonds." All three ballets rely on a complex interworking of structure and style; without a sense of how "Jewels" operates, it cannot be done, either in whole or in part. When it was last seen, a year ago, New York City Ballet's supposedly definitive production was nearly two-thirds de-

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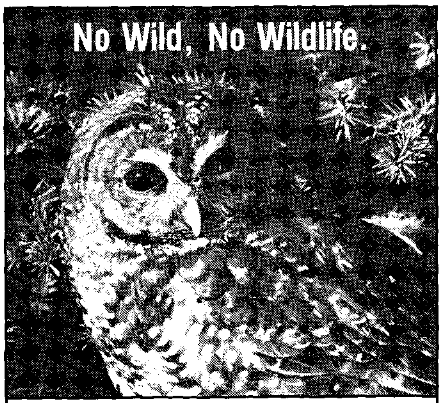

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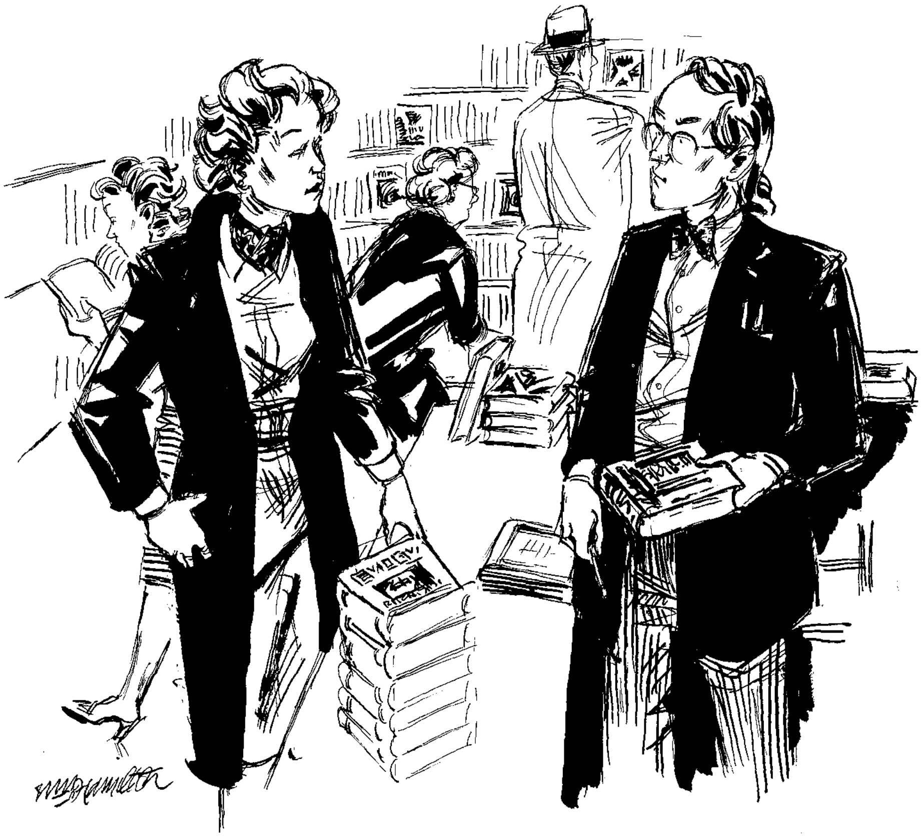
stroyed, with only corps work and, less dependably, the performing of the "Diamonds" ballerina to carry the whole thing off. (All too often, you got the wrong ballerina.) The qualities that "Jewels" requires—precision of execution, musical intelligence, energy, and taste—happen not to exist in abundance anywhere in the world today. The failure of Balanchine's own company adds one other scarce quality to that daunting list of requisites: nerve.

Miami City Ballet is not a great company; it is merely one of the most daring and rewarding of the younger companies now on the rise throughout the country. Its director, Edward Villella, has perception as well as ambition. When he produced "Rubies," two and a half years ago, he knew from having danced it for Balanchine that high spirits were not enough. Determined to acquire the entire trilogy, he depended on an excellent staff and some talented dancers to help him bring off a coup. At this point in their development, the Miamians are finding out what it takes to turn a company into an institution. The complete "Jewels" was to have crowned seven years of steady growth; instead, its première last month, at the Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, in West Palm Beach, was a triumph, precisely, of nerve. For Miami City Ballet, 1992 has been a year of setbacks. Like every other company, it was troubled by the recession, but it also had bad luck: an engagement in Los Angeles cancelled because of the riots, and, four months later, the Florida hurricane. Although only the company's wardrobe department suffered actual storm damage, the disaster wiped out important funding sources and threw a heavy damper on ticket sales.

For a luxury operation like ballet, this was hell, nor is the company out of it. But there is a venturesomeness about the Miamians that reminds me of New York City Ballet in its City Center years. Last month's "Jewels" went on with an orchestra threatening to strike (very N.Y.C.B., this). The storm hadn't kept the resident designer, Haydée Morales, from coming through with a complete set of Karinska-inspired costumes. On the eve of the première, however, the scenery for "Diamonds," which had to move on cue, still hadn't been tried out.

But the première, a gala benefit, was a sellout, and in spite of everything the coup happened on schedule. The conductor, reassuringly enough, was Akira

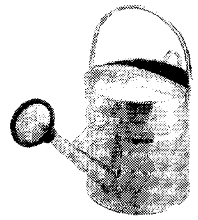


"He likes spies and big shots."

Endo, formerly of American Ballet Theatre. As the "Diamonds" cast swung into the finish, the audience blasted off, and it was pure madhouse for ten minutes after the curtain fell. Not since the last great performances of Suzanne Farrell and Peter Martins had the ballet gone over like this. But, of course, Miami City Ballet does not possess the likes of Suzanne Farrell and Peter Martins—or Violette Verdy or Patricia McBride. Or Edward Villella. What the Miami production proved was that "Jewels" can exist without the stars it once showcased so memorably. A company with a secure enough sense of structure and style can present this elusive ballet—can make it seem possible again for another generation of dancers in an America irrevocably changed by what Balanchine wrought back in the sixties and seventies.

In the principal roles, the company gave performances ranging from the well-drilled and workmanlike, through the movingly conscientious, to the surprisingly apt. There were no great personal revelations along the way (those will come), but the ballets were revelation enough: stopped clocks started ticking again. "Rubies" is a real job of restoration. No one performs the Villella role better today than the Romanian dancer Marin Boieru; he lacks only Villella's spontaneity and sense of mischief to be perfect. Maribel Modrono, a McBride-in-the-making, evaded none of the difficulties that lay in her path. That is the way to grow and to keep the ballet alive. The beginning of the end for New York City Ballet's "Emeralds" came when its ballerinas decided that the Verdy choreography was too subtle, too hard, or "too Violette," and only the Farrell role really mattered anyway. Marielena Mencia is not the dancer to restore the Verdy role—she's not even remotely a Balanchine dancer—but her mettlesome performance of the wonderful "bracelets" solo was a rebuke to the elaborate faking we see at N.Y.C.B. Mencia and Iliana Lopez are Villella's two senior ballerinas and were already formed stylistically when he hired them. Lopez, with the same disadvantage of being untrained in Balanchine style, knew what to aim for in the "Diamonds" adagio. Partnered securely by her husband, Franklin Gamero, she succeeded in adding scale and consequence to her dancing, and heightening the soft lustre she has by nature; I have never admired her more. The company is beginning to show us a ballerina lineup. In Maribel Modrono, and in her twin sister, Mabel, who danced in the "Emeralds" pas de trois, School of American Ballet virtues gleam. Below principal level, there is a uniform elegance of bearing that looks new and looks solid, too. The freedom of movement in the upper back is a special joy; it's another thing I recall seeing in the City Center company. Villella's dancers aren't the new breed of overcorrect T-square classicists who sap the dance meaning from Balanchine's ballets. And the best of them aren't all men, although along with Boieru there was Arnold Quintane, outstanding in the "Emeralds" pas de trois. The most exciting dancer in "Jewels," the most exuberant and the wittiest, was Myrna Kamara. Other dancers may have performed both the bighearted, space-straddling showgirl of "Rubies" and the role I think of as Melisande's in "Emeralds," but not usually in the same performance, and not like this. Kamara has re-created both characters; her natural energy unleashes something new on the ballet stage, and Villella is giving her chances she has never had before. She spent five years in New York City Ballet getting nowhere. Now, suddenly, she has a future.

One hopes that the company does, too—that its misfortunes won't continue into next year. This "Jewels" marks a very evident new stage in the maturing of a company style. The production, the only complete "Jewels" besides New York City Ballet's, goes into repertory in Miami on February 27th, by which time the scenery problem, which is conceptual as well as functional, will presumably have been solved. Where does "Diamonds" take place? Robert Darling's frosted ochre pennants against dark-blue drapes suggested nothing to me. Some elongated diamond-shaped mirrors that descended during the polonaise suggested "Vienna Waltzes." Pairs of stalactites lowered at the start of the chorale were dramatic but confusing: were we in an ice cavern? But the illuminated green-disk constellations of "Emeralds" and the red ones of "Rubies" were perfectly O.K. ♦



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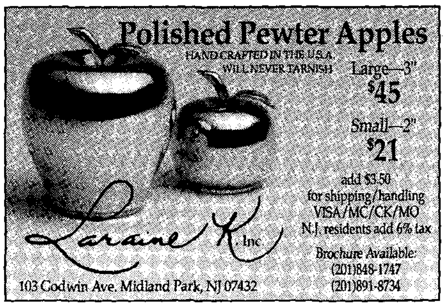

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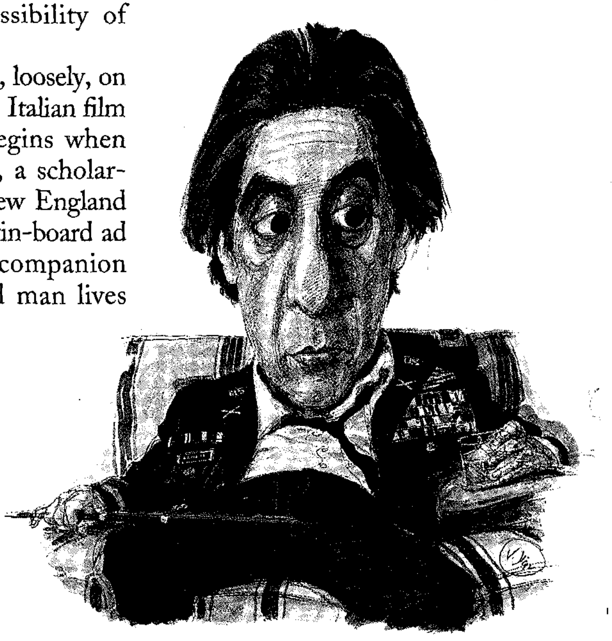
THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE ENEMY WITHIN

by Terrence Rafferty

MARTIN BREST'S "Scent of a Woman," about the relationship between a middle-aged blind man and a troubled teen-ager who has been hired to take care of him over the Thanksgiving weekend, is designed to be a holiday-season heart-warmer—one of those movies (like "Rain Man," say) in which adventures are had by mismatched characters, laughs and tears are jerked from the defenseless audience, and lessons are learned by all. The movie doesn't carry out these low intentions very effectively. Brest and the screenwriter, Bo Goldman ("Melvin and Howard," "Shoot the Moon"), labor mightily to deliver the inspirational goods, but their efforts are undone by the star, Al Pacino, whose performance as the sightless protagonist taps emotions too complex and too frightening to be resolved by the simple moral victory that ends the picture. Pacino's Frank Slade, a retired Army officer and a former aide to L.B.J., is a bitter, misanthropic, profoundly depressed man, and the actor makes us feel the full weight of the character's hopelessness. This is acting that chills the heart beyond any possibility of warming.

The story (which is based, loosely, on "Profumo di Donna," a 1975 Italian film with Vittorio Gassman) begins when Charlie (Chris O'Donnell), a scholarship boy at an illustrious New England prep school, answers a bulletin-board ad and agrees to be Slade's companion while the people the blind man lives with—his niece and her family—are out of town for the holidays. The night before Charlie starts work, he witnesses the engineering of an elaborate prank that a few of his privileged classmates plan to spring on the headmaster. After the stunt comes off, Charlie is in a sticky situation: he doesn't want to rat on the culprits, but the headmaster threatens to expel him if he remains silent—to remove him forcibly from the prep-school, Ivy League fast track and return him to the working-class milieu he came from. He is given the long weekend to make his decision. Will his experiences with Slade somehow help poor Charlie figure out what to do? Of course they will. Between the setup and the inevitable triumphant resolution of the young man's problem, however, "Scent of a Woman" mostly concentrates on Slade, who is introduced to us as an irascible, sharp-tongued bully sitting in a darkened room and belting back one Jack Daniel's after another. And, even though we know that we'll ultimately be required to find this abrasive character lovable, he *is* fascinating. He isn't merely a cute curmudgeon, a softie who has, in the usual Hollywood-movie way, developed a hard shell to protect the tender soul within. Slade's bark may be worse than his bite, as his niece tells Charlie, but his bite is pretty bad, and we gradually come to understand that the aggression he directs at other people is just playful nibbling compared with what he does to himself. At a certain point, we



As Frank Slade, Al Pacino slashes and burns his way through "Scent of a Woman."

realize, with a jolt, that we're watching someone whose life is an endless, agonizing process of self-consumption—a man in hell.

Minutes after Slade's relatives (whom he refers to, with characteristic cruelty, as "the Flintstones") leave on their Thanksgiving trip, he spirits his weekend keeper off to New York City: he has made airline reservations and booked a suite at the Waldorf. He says he has a plan, and Charlie will help him execute it. We (along with Charlie) soon learn that Slade's plan is to indulge in a few of his favorite earthly pleasures—rich food, expensive booze, a luxurious bed, and sex with a beautiful woman—and then blow his brains out with his service revolver. The weekend in New York is meant to be "a last tour of the battlefield." As Slade leads Charlie around the city and collects the sweet sensations that are to be his final impressions of the world, Pacino guides us through the character's dense and terrifying inner landscape: he takes us to neighborhoods that aren't on the map. He mimics blindness convincingly and does justice, too, to Slade's military mannerisms, but this performance isn't out to wow us with surface verisimilitude. Pacino is more interested in exploring the textures and contours and rhythms of despair, and he goes at that daunting project with a weird kind of joy: the excitement of an artist who senses that he's really onto something. He makes Slade a *passionate* depressive: the absoluteness of the character's nihilism produces an exhilarating alternation of reckless vitality and sudden, crushing fatigue—of intense pleasure and annihilating disappointment at its passing. Slade's no-exit emotional state never becomes dreary; it's too volatile. And the character is often startlingly funny. Depression doesn't necessarily kill a person's sense of humor. Believing in nothing and being utterly indifferent to what people think of you can have a sort of liberating effect on verbal wit. Slade will say anything, to anybody, and Pacino spits out his most vicious lines with unholy glee.

While "Scent of a Woman" focusses on Slade's problems, it's absorbing. When, in the last half hour, the action shifts back to New England, and Goldman and Brest try to wrap up Charlie's dilemma, there's a huge letdown. With a long, loud theatrical flourish, the narrative reaches its (foregone) conclusion. Too long, too loud: we sense that the filmmakers, weary pros, are faking a climax. They dismiss the audience with a banal lesson written on the blackboard—"Smell the roses" is the gist—but by that point we're not paying much attention. We're still sorting out the ambiguities and uncomfortable truths that Pacino's great performance has let us in on. He has led us to the heart of darkness, and there's no quick route back.

THE life of the flamboyant labor leader Jimmy Hoffa, who was one of the most compelling public figures in America in the fifties and sixties, is a terrific subject for a movie. It's a story about power and corruption, like "Citizen Kane" and the "Godfather" pictures. Hoffa, who started organizing for the Teamsters union in the thirties and became its president in 1957, was largely responsible for building the union into a tremendously important political force, but the means he used to achieve that clout were dubious: he had an uncomfortably close relationship with organized crime. He lay down with mobsters and he got up with subpoenas. From the late fifties until his convictions for jury tampering and fraud, in 1964, he must have been the most exhaustively investigated man in the country. Hoffa always protested that everything he did (not that he admitted much) was for the benefit of the workingman, and he was very popular with the Teamsters' rank and file. Others—notably Robert Kennedy, who, first as chief counsel to a Senate committee and then as Attorney General, hounded Hoffa relentlessly—thought he was betraying the idea of the labor movement. In 1975, he vanished, probably the victim of a mob hit, and his body has never been found.

"Hoffa," directed by Danny DeVito from a script by David Mamet, spends two hours and fifteen minutes not telling the story of Jimmy Hoffa. With a subject so large, you expect some messiness: rushed exposition; the simplification of complex issues; even, here and there, an incoherent passage. But what DeVito and Mamet have done in this film couldn't have been predicted. They've drained Hoffa of all his substance, of everything that made him interesting; they've made his life inconsequential. Their Hoffa (Jack Nicholson) is virtually a fictional character, and not a particularly vivid one, at that. He's just a blustery movie tough guy: he gives speeches whose content we aren't encouraged to think about; he pops up in the foreground of labor disputes that haven't been explained to us; he appears before investigative panels whose purposes are unclear, and is interrogated about crimes we've neither seen nor heard about. Deprived of any kind of legible historical context, Hoffa starts to look small, fragile, and wispy; and, to make matters worse, the movie surrounds him with phantoms. Most of the supporting characters are composites or pure inventions, and a couple of them might even be called decomposites. Aspects of the alarming Anthony Provenzano—a Teamsters official and a reputed mob capo, a prison buddy of Hoffa's and later a prime suspect in his disappearance—are here divided between a couple of fictional characters: Bobby Ciaro (DeVito), a loyal aide, and Carol D'Allesandro (Armand Assante), a sinister underworld operator. (The few historical figures portrayed here are such caricatures that they validate Hoffa's highly prejudicial views of his enemies: Frank Fitzsimmons, his successor as the Teamsters' president, is depicted as a coward and a traitor; Robert Kennedy comes off as a mean, stammering little publicity-seeker.) "Hoffa" tells us less about Hoffa than it does about David Mamet's chronic nostalgia for the manly-man ethos of yesteryear. This movie's Hoffa is just the most recent expression of Mamet's romantic vision of America, where beefy, two-fisted giants once walked and thugs were thugs, not corporate weasels.

If that kind of macho mythology doesn't hit you where you live, you're not going to find a lot to enjoy or admire in "Hoffa." The script doesn't give Nicholson much to do except rant and pose; he winds up doing Nicholson shtick in Hoffa makeup. DeVito's direction emphasizes spectacle over narrative flow and character development, and he's not a skillful enough director to bring the spectacle off; the picture lumbers from one gigantic, clumsily staged set piece to another. Wherever the real Jimmy Hoffa is today, there's not a trace of him, dead or alive, in the landfill this movie is built on. ♦

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KING JAMES AND PRINCE CHARLIE

by Michael Sragow

IF the director Walter Hill gave a standing order when he made the rock-the-house new thriller "Trespass," it must have been "No prisoners." This urban-siege suspense film, about a nightmarish treasure hunt in a gutted factory, actually does what this year's action hits have tried and failed to do: it puts viewers in a force field that jangles nerves, heightens senses, and pumps adrenal glands. Hill peoples that force field with desperate men who express themselves in catastrophic acts. They include Vince (Bill Paxton) and Don (William Sadler), two Arkansas firemen who follow a map to a stash of stolen gold in an East St. Louis plant; Bradlee (Art Evans), a black squatter in their path; and the core members of an inner-city crime syndicate, led by King James (Ice T) and his hothead lieutenant Savon (Ice Cube). The story hinges on a *disastrous coincidence.* King James instigates a murder on the factory roof soon after the firemen go in for the gold; Don sees the victim thrown off, and Vince sees him hit bottom. In the panicky confrontation that ensues, Don seizes King James's junkie younger brother and holds him hostage in a high-security room where he holes up with Vince and the man in the middle, Bradlee. There's no exit.

Working from a devilishly well-structured script by Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale, Hill doesn't resort to the fey aesthetic games that won acclaim for "Reservoir Dogs," or the jokey derring-do that lets audiences off the hook in sloppy action blockbusters like "Passenger 57." The black humor in this movie is straight up and the ironies are down and out: Art Evans' ornery Bradlee continues to curse Vince and Don after they tie him to a chair and gag him, and long after the fireworks start Ice Cube's surly, deadpan Savon mutters, "This shit's getting hectic." Hill, Zemeckis, and Gale refuse to supply viewers with self-righteous men-against-the-world types, like Steven Seagal, who lead audiences through cheap thrills to a five-cent catharsis. The locations in "Trespass" go from low-rent to no-rent (at fourteen million dollars, it qualifies as a low-budget Hollywood movie), but the terror is rich because the terror is earned.

"Trespass" spells out—on worn brick walls with spray from an M-16—the lesson F. Scott Fitzgerald learned as a screenwriter: "Action is character." Near the beginning, a crazed old man, begging for God's mercy, stuffs some papers in Vince's hands and then immolates himself. When Vince realizes that they contain clues to a hidden pile of priceless gold church relics, his partner, Don, persuades him that their ship has come in; Don rationalizes that the church collected insurance, that the statute of limitations has run out on the theft anyway, and that he and Vince ought to get something more than a salary for a life of service. Even before the two go past the "No Trespassing" sign on the chain-link fence and enter the no man's land of a blighted industrial park, you can tell that Vince is heading out of his element and Don is heading into his: you read the moral drift in Paxton's anguished eyes, just as you see the gold lust and the all-or-nothing fervor in Sadler's cruel ones. You fear the worst, but you want to know how it turns out—their fever is catching. It's difficult to begrudge these working stiffs an easy score, though it lands them in a moral murk.

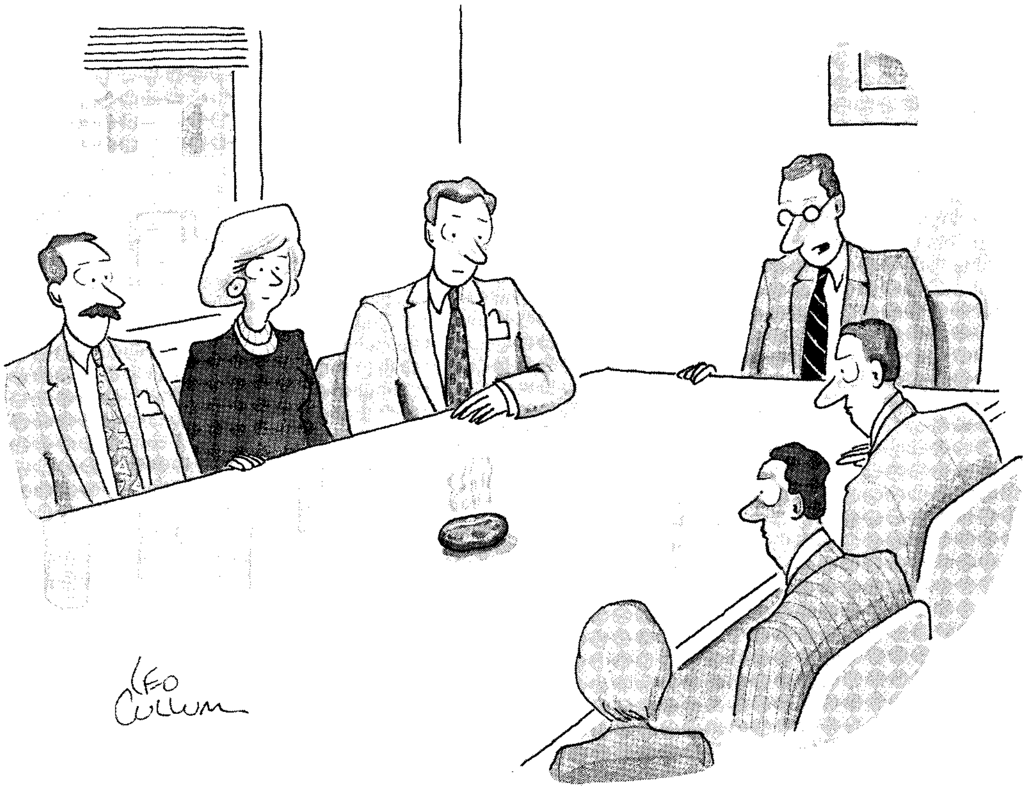
When Don manhandles the squatter Bradlee, Hill reveals how sorely our sympathies will be tested. The strength of the movie lies in the weight the director gives to Bradlee, and to the armed criminals on the other side of the door. Bradlee has no use for the firemen *or* the gangsters who descend on him; he lays claim to a piece of anything anyone finds on his turf. In a sardonic, grungy way, he's comical. His territory is so rickety that his territoriality seems partly delusional—and partly a wily survival strategy. Of course, King James's bad-ass wild bunch are the most dangerous characters. But that's because they're so divisive and complicated. King James's cellular phone keeps beeping between gunshots. He's a businessman having a hard day that's turning hellish. When his brother, Lucky (De'Voreaux White), ends up in the firemen's hands, King James is no longer just a wheeler-dealer; he's a family man pushed to the edge. This slick mobster has feelers: King James knows that Savon wants to wrest control from him. In "Trespass," everyone has his reasons. Mostly, bad ones.

There's another major character: the decrepit factory itself. Just as Edgar Allan Poe in "The Gold-Bug" transformed a treasure hunt into an exercise that mirrors (in the words of the Poe biographer Kenneth A. Silverman) "the exhumation of a corpse," Hill transforms the hunt in "Trespass" into an unguided tour of a ravaged mausoleum. The religious nature of the loot signifies how topsy-turvy this film's moral universe gets. The design of the factory—it has arched upper-story windows, like a funeral home or a church—augments the sense of a world out of whack. The first thing Vince and Don stumble upon is a corpse swinging from a rope. The body might as well be entombed, since no cop will check this desolate site. The instant equation of lucre and death helps give the film its devastating combination of naturalism and eeriness. Vince and Don can't break a safe route out of their barricaded room, because the walls are solid; they smash away with their tools and get nowhere. With details like that, the melodrama is both perilously real and symbolically powerful.

For the most part, Hill doesn't labor the point that the building and the battlefield it becomes are metaphors for the American city. He plays that concept for raucous farce and rippling horror: the last section of the film could be subtitled "Burn, baby, burn." (Its only qualification as a Christmas movie is that Vince climbs a chimney like Santa Claus.) Hill has kept the plentiful acts of violence terse and matter-of-fact; the shock lies in their staccato abruptness, and in the way they create a racking atmosphere. The gangland execution that opens the film, depicted in the grainy images of a syndicate member's video-cam, achieves in a flash the ghastliness of the first ten minutes of "One False Move." Along with his masterly editor, Freeman Davies, Hill pulls off kinetic strokes in the midst of squalor. When a man gets a gangplank shot out from under him, or turns away from a window just as a bullet leaves a hole in the glass where his head had been, Hill and Davies generate the excitement you might have felt at your very first adventure movie.

The script keeps the turnarounds coming, but the characters aren't jack-in-the boxes; they're figures in a street dance of death. The cinematographer, Lloyd Ahern, and the production designer, Jon Hutman, recognize the power of simplicity. Their Spartan colors and motifs pay off when you see odd patches of beauty in the debris—like the hexagonal tiles that pattern a stretch of the factory's floor—and witness the corruscating riches spread out against the wreckage. Ry Cooder's power-surging score features a sort of strangulated jazz and an opening-credit track with a long, low twang that could be called acid blues. Hill mixes Cooder's music and an array of unsettling sounds to form a risky, unpredictable aural cityscape. In some of the best moments, the director silences everything, so that a single noise or movement provides a disquieting *frisson*: a prying tool hitting and lifting a loose floorboard that exposes a can of money, or a metal detector picking up the cleats on a gangster's baseball shoes. At those times, "Trespass" has the spare ruthlessness of a Jack London short story. Hill also brings to the film the gothic quality of Poe, the sardonicism of Ambrose Bierce, and, most important, the blaspheming explosiveness of contemporary black youth culture.

Ice T and Ice Cube deserve their positions at the head of the high-energy ensemble of hoods. (It also includes Glenn Plummer and Byron Keith Minns, who are as veracious here as they were in the underrated gang movie "South Central.") Ice T gives King James a baronial stature and an uneasy-lies-the-head-that-wears-a-crown brand of torment, while Ice Cube is magnetically caustic. The movie capitalizes on their bad-boy reps: it puts the guerrilla-theatre tactics of their albums in a context that makes them scarily palpable. Their declamatory styles mesh with Hill's, and so do their obsessions with survival. As movie-mag readers know, this film was originally called "The Looters" and was scheduled for release shortly after the L.A. riots. It was pushed back because of the incendiary title and, presumably, the heated content. Actually, the movie isn't about a riot; it only feels like one. Nearly a de-



"That, my friends, is a hot potato."

cade and a half ago, Pauline Kael hailed Hill's "The Warriors" as visual rock. "Trespass" is visual rap.

Charlie Chaplin used to deliver what "Trespass" does: a kick in the pants of the bourgeoisie. Because of the sedate, humanistic reputation that has settled over his name, young audiences just now seeing great works like "The Gold Rush" and "Modern Times" are apt to be startled and delighted by their combination of balletic grace and robust iconoclastic farce. Richard Attenborough's sprawling bio-pic "Chaplin" features the astonishingly talented Robert Downey, Jr., in the title role. He embodies the distinctive Chaplin blend of spunk, poetry, and enigmatic sensuality, and the film has some diverting and touching patches. But overall "Chaplin" is diffuse, gimmicky, and damnably respectable. Chaplin, who went from being the most popular artist in the movies to being one with only fringe appeal, who resisted talking pictures but remained sporadically active through four decades of the sound era, and who inspired the F.B.I. to investigate both his progressive politics and his marriages to very young women, calls for at least as much filmmaking craft and ingenuity as, say, T. E. Lawrence or William Randolph Hearst.

Aside from a few attempts to ape silent-slapstick style, Attenborough and the screenwriters (William Boyd, Bryan Forbes, and William Goldman, working from a story by Diana Hawkins) do their job like crammers. They overstuff nearly two and a half hours of running time with Chaplin's Dickensian London boyhood, his apprenticeship in vaudeville, his growing mastery of movie comedy, his frustrating love life, and the political consequences of his social conscience. Not surprisingly, simplification sets in early. The filmmakers justify Chaplin's fondness for underage cuties by showing his amorous impulses arrested in his late teens: he falls hard for an unresponsive sixteen-year-old chorus girl named Hetty Kelly. Until he meets the teen-age Oona O'Neill, any other mate is an unsatisfactory substitute. You can't miss the point: Attenborough casts Moira Kelly as both Hetty and Oona. And the script personalizes the conflict between Chaplin and J. Edgar Hoover (Kevin Dunn), so that the F.B.I.'s well-documented persecution of the clown is rooted in Chaplin's careless dinner-table snubbing of America's favorite law-and-order fanatic.

The movie's narrative is spun from the memories of Chaplin himself, as his editor (Anthony Hopkins) prods him for details he's leaving out of his 1964 autobiography. This conceit provides a rationale for buckjumping from one biographical peak to the next. Even so, the filmmakers ignore the bold accomplishment of Chaplin's 1947 black comedy, "Monsieur Verdoux," *and* the self-justifying excesses of "Limelight" and "A King in New York." The movie occasionally functions as a flipbook presentation of a cavalcade of stars. You get glimpses of Stan Laurel (Matthew Cottle), Mack Sennett (Dan Aykroyd), Mabel Normand (Marisa Tomei), Bronco Billy Anderson (Richard Fast), Edna Purviance (Penelope Ann Miller), Douglas Fairbanks (Kevin Kline), Mary Pickford (Maria Pitillo), Marion Davies (Heather McNair), and Paulette Goddard (Diane Lane). Even the impersonations that are funny and promising—such as Kline's florid gallant and Lane's warm beauty—amount to flickering gestures. And the characterization of Chaplin shades toward unwavering genius. Here he's the Little Tramp in more ways than one: he's always a little cleverer, a little more sensitive, a little more lyrically tortured than anyone else. For example, in the scene that depicts his fight with Mabel Normand over her direction of a Sennett comedy—a spat that led to Chaplin's winning his own chance to direct—the filmmakers side totally with Chaplin. By contrast, Chaplin's official biographer, David Robinson, notes, in "Chaplin: His Life and Art," that the water-hose gag Normand refused to accept "was, in historic fact, the oldest joke in the cinema." And Normand's biographer, Betty Harper Fussell, contends that Chaplin simply couldn't abide the idea of a female director, though Normand was a stalwart, sympathetic collaborator at a time when "most of those who worked with him were repelled by the intense dark-eyed Cockney who was vulgar in his manners, filthy in his person, and totally lacking in self-humor." Fussell's characterization may be highly partisan, but Chaplin's gritty accomplishment and staying power *would* make more sense if the movie portrayed him with vulgarity and stink.

FOR SALE
Judith Shahn

The film's most powerful and tightly focussed sections come when Attenborough sketches Chaplin's hardscrabble early years—the prime source of the comic's pathos-laden creativity. With unblinking intelligence and compassion, Geraldine Chaplin manages the feat of playing her own mad grandmother—Hannah Chaplin, a soubrette who couldn't handle the pressure of facing an audience or the obligation of supporting Charlie and his half brother, Sydney. The scene in which the fourteen-year-old Charlie (Tom Bradford) commits Hannah to an insane asylum vibrates with real-life detail. (She thinks the floor is the River Jordan.) Geraldine Chaplin imbues Hannah with a wounded maternalism and an addled propriety; she's wrenching enough to haunt the rest of the film.

Remarkably, Downey shares some of her unhinged look, and it helps give Charlie an aura of free-floating emotion. Downey is an extraordinary physical mimic: his deftness and agility make the loose re-creations of Chaplin's evolving style fun to watch. His suggestion of an unruly interior life is what keeps the movie (barely) alive. The best parts of "Chaplin" come together when the exiled hero, barred from this country since the McCarthy era, returns to receive a special Oscar at the 1972 Academy Awards presentation. When you see the film clips shown to celebrate the occasion, Attenborough finally allows you to appreciate Chaplin's artistry divorced from obvious story points. The excerpt from "The Kid" is overpowering, partly because of the connections between that film's Dickensian milieu and Chaplin's troubled youth. And Downey is amazing as the elderly Chaplin. It's a tribute to Downey that when Attenborough cuts to Chaplin's eyes filling with tears as the Tramp embraces Jackie Coogan in "The Kid" the moment isn't sticky or embarrassing. It's transporting. ♦

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The North China Lover

by Marguerite Duras, translated from the French by Leigh Hafrey (New Press; $19.95)

MOST mothers would not be pleased to find that their fourteen-year-old daughter is skipping out of school to sleep with a twenty-seven-year-old man. This one tells her child, "They like you, men," and takes money from the wealthy lover. She is French, the respected widowed director of a girls' school in colonial Vietnam, and she needs money because her older son is in debt to the local opium den, and murderous besides. As if this were not quite colorful enough, the girl wants to suffer for her lover, just as he asks her questions hoping "to suffer because of you." On top of that, the girl has been sexually involved with her younger brother for years, requests her lover to deflower a school chum with whom she has an erotically charged friendship, and reveals that the person she most desires is yet a third brother, this one adopted. The book, written as a sort of shooting script in protest against the aesthetic choices made by those who filmed the author's earlier, sketchier version of this story, is narrated in Duras's characteristic tone of cryptic solemnity.

The Loop

by Joe Coomer (Faber & Faber; $21.95)

IT is impossible to resist a book whose dedication reads "For dogs," and whose opening portrays the arrival of a lost parrot. The bird lands at the door of the trailer residence of a highway worker named Lyman, and announces, "I'm an eagle," and "That which hath wings shall tell the matter." Lyman, who has never known anything about where he comes from—his parents died in a crash on the loop of highway where he does rescue work—burns to discover the origin and history of the bird's wit and wisdom. To this end, he enlists the help of a librarian who has been making unwelcome advances to him, and finds out, over the course of the book, not only the eighty-year sequence of his bird's owners but—of course—that he likes the librarian. If the book is over-eager in converting the characters' difficulties into bonuses, its use of a parrot who is as portentous as Poe's raven is gratifying in the manner of a mystery story, especially the kind that a psychoanalyst solves when reconstructing the history of a personality from seemingly random utterances.

GENERAL

We Were the People: Voices from East Germany's Revolutionary Autumn of 1989

by Dirk Philipsen (Duke; $49.95 cloth; $19.95 paper)

THIS oral history recalls the experiences of brave men and women, members of several hundred small dissident groups in East Germany, who dared to petition and demonstrate against a monolithic police state. Most of these people are disappointed with the results of German unification. They had hoped to remodel East Germany, "to reform our own country ourselves," but find themselves, for the most part, swamped by West Germany and West German politicians. The author, who grew up in West Germany, asks probing questions; his sympathy never hampers his critical intelligence as he searches for what went wrong. We discover that few of these idealists had developed the skills of politicians; that although East Germany was theoretically a classless society, workers and intellectuals had little contact; and that feuds among opposition leaders prevented dissident groups from uniting. Nonetheless, Mr. Philipsen insists that their vision was noble and asks us to remember a moment in history when East Germans had a sense of community.

Shakespeare: His Life, Work, and Era

by Dennis Kay (Morrow; $23)

IT is a commonplace that very little is known of the life and person of William Shakespeare, and it is true that there is a dearth of facts about, among other things, his private thoughts and his emotional temper. This masterly study, the product of exhaustive research by an Oxford scholar, shows that a very good idea of what Shakespeare was like can be constructed from what is known of the externals of his family life and family history, the beginnings of the professional theatre in England, the testimony of Shakespeare's friends, competitors, and enemies, and the evidence to be derived from analysis of the style and content of the plays and sonnets. Putting these elements in the context of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods—times of extraordinary intellectual ferment, moral uncertainty, and cynicism—the author can present us with a fairly convincing amalgam, although, to be sure, one lacking the idiom of an actual personality. It is probably safe to say, however, that all that is known about William Shakespeare can be found in this volume.

The Crystal Desert: Summers in Antarctica

by David G. Campbell (Houghton Mifflin; $21.95)

A PORTRAIT, painted from life, of Antarctica—"a place," the author says, "that for most of human history has lain beyond the rim of realization." Mr. Campbell, a biologist and environmentalist, spent three summers on the Antarctic Peninsula studying such recondite matters as the pathologies of amphipods and other forms of sea-bottom life. He was keenly alive, however, to the wonder of the frozen world around him, and to Antarctica's history and morphology, and he appreciated its hostility to man (who must never let his guard down), its beauty, and its peculiarities. For instance, in caring for a wounded snow petrel, he found he had to keep the bird in the food freezer, lest it perish from indoor temperatures. Mr. Campbell is one of those writers whose powers of exposition have been enhanced by the discipline of science: his descriptions of the life cycles of penguins, terns, elephant seals, whales, and other Antarctic animal life are unforgettable.

FROM OUR PAGES

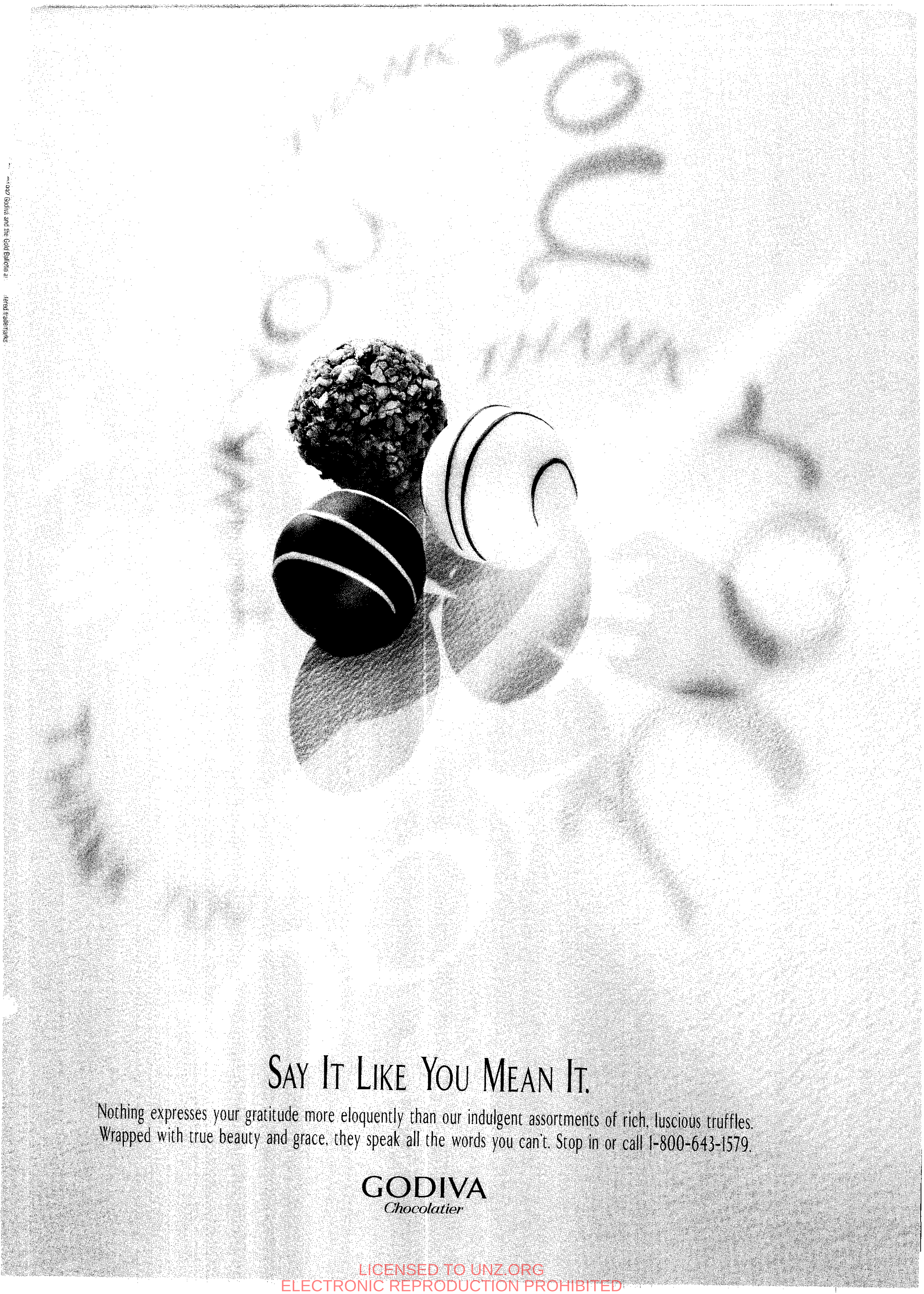
The Education of an Archbishop: Travels with Rembert Weakland, by Paul Wilkes, has been published by Orbis Books ($13.95). Nearly all the contents first appeared in *The New Yorker.* ♦

GREETINGS, FRIENDS!

by Roger Angell

Stop here, good reader, half a mo
And place your finger on the bow
That holds this fragrant wreath of rhyme
We've put together right on time—
With firs and bonds of friendship plaited,
And platitudes redecorated,
And cones and canes and holly berry,
And chains of names that keep us merry—
To grace our doorway, there to say
God bless us each this holiday!
Happy days, old pals and hearts,
Atop or nowhere on the charts.
Cheers to you all along this ramble!
Joy to Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell,
David Salle, Natasha Turi,
Roseanne Cash, and Callie Khouri.
Hey-hey for good gray George C. Scott!
Hooray for Pat Buchanan—*not!*
I trust these rusty rhymes can say
How much we care for I. M. Pei,
And add some gladsome sentiment
For Magic Johnson, Arthur Kent,
Danny DeVito, Carla Hills,
Cito Gaston, and the Buffalo Bills.
Your roars, this hoary Homer says,
For Al Gore and our newfound Prez!
Godspeed, you guys—and Happy Chrs.
To Hillary, our bright First Ms.
(I hope the new consensus will
Include us in the Friends of Bill.)
George Bush, of thee I guess I sing:
Good luck with the retirement thing;
And, now that push has come to shove,
Farewell, Barbara, you old luv.
Salut, Philippe de Montebello!
Ah, there, Fresh Prince, my good fellow!
Ice Cube and -T, God rest you merry;
Yo-ho, you Rices—Anne and Jerry!
Now, trumpeters, let's hear a tucket
To light the smile of Kirby Puckett;
And then let fly some brassy peals on
Philip Glass and Leslie Nielsen.
You horns and waits, pray wait upon
Kurt Masur and Elton John,
Mary Gordon, Paul Sarbanes,
Air Jordan, and the Flying Cranes,
While carols cast their warming glow
On Barbara Boxer, Riddick Bowe,
John Major (the well-known Brit),
Jaromir Jagr, and Travis Tritt.
Hey, Santa-man, go grab some sky
And drop a sock on Robert Bly.
Then door to door with toys repair
For Dennis Byrd and Bonnie Blair,
With stops to unload candy cane
At the abode of Michael Frayn,
And scarves and stuff picked out expressly
For Rob Brown and Priscilla Presley;
Plus a necktie, plain but cheerful,
For Ross Perot, our little earful;
And *shokolad*—the kind that melts in
The mouth, not hand, of Boris Yeltsin—
And thence by turns to Laura Dern's,
To Pee-wee Herman's and David Stern's,
And each good girl's and boy's address,
And thus around the world progress,
Dispensing joy and dental caries
From Minsk to Troy and Buenos Aires!
Let's bang on the pipes for Eleanor Gould
And similar types we wish to see Yuled;
Viz., Maureen Dowd, ol' Nolan Ryan,
Patty Murray, Patrick O'Brien,
George Stephanopoulos (rhyme ya later),
Cal McCormick, Christian Slater,
Manon Rheaume, Colin Powell,
The Blue Jays, and the spotted owl.
Fond reader (and Tipper and Nipper and all),
C'mon to our gonzo Inaugural Ball,
To toss off some bumpers and waltz with a will,
And party in honor of President Bill!
Here's where warm hearts grow rife or rifer,
Near Donna Tartt and Michelle Pfeiffer,
With B. B. King and his Lucille,
And Dee Dee Myers and Brian Friel!
Airborne with Kristi Yamaguchi,
Rip Torn, John Zorn, Maria Tucci,
Around the floor we'll dip and cruise
With Madonna and Naguib Mahfouz,
E. O. Wilson, Amy Tan,
Larry King, and Princess Anne.
It's New Year's, dears—let's dance till dawn
With Swamp Dogg, Carol Moseley Braun,
The Bros. Marsalis (Branford, Wynton),
Alice Waters and Chelsea Clinton,
Ren and Stimpy, Gergen and Shields,
And the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields!

We come at last to our envoi,
Which wishes you a year of joy,
From painful change a brief surcease,
And on this earth a lot more peace.
May trees of lights and cheerful rooms
Intrude upon our winter glooms,
And festive thoughts, we pray, remind us
Spring one day will come and find us. ♦



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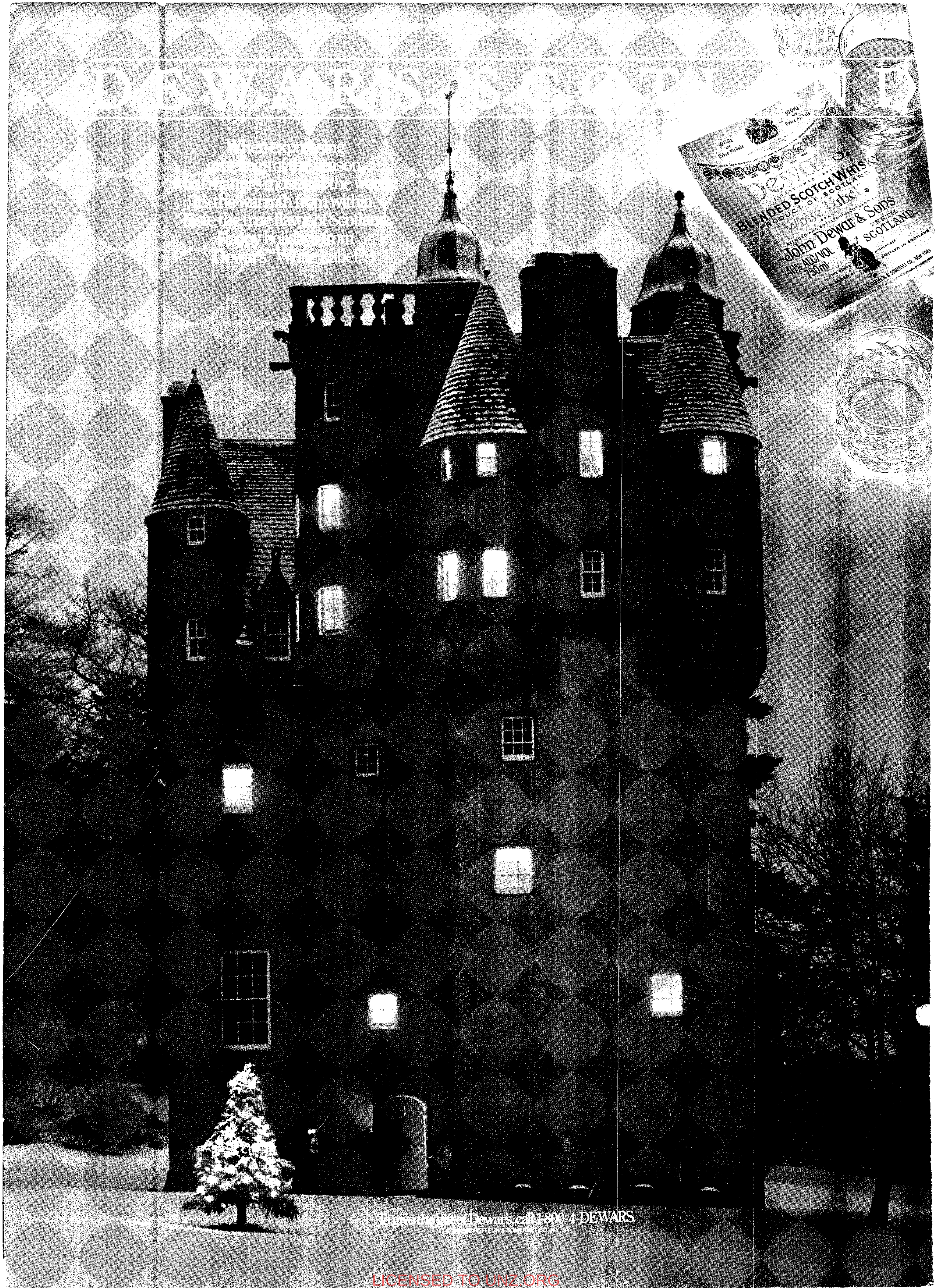

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